

Machiavelli, Islam and the East

Reorienting the Foundations of Modern Political Thought

*Edited by Lucio Biasiori
and Giuseppe Marcocci*



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Editors

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Reorienting the Foundations of Modern Political
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PREFACE

A one-day workshop entitled ‘Machiavelli, Islam and the East’ was held at the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa, on 6 May 2013, when a group of colleagues gathered to celebrate the fifth centenary of *The Prince* by discussing overlooked features of its author’s contribution to the foundation of modern political thought. The event was organized in the framework of the FIRB-Futuro in Ricerca 2008 research project ‘Beyond the Holy War’ (2010–2014), of which Giuseppe Marcocci was the Principal Investigator, funded by the Italian Ministry of Education, Universities and Research.

We are grateful to the staff of the Scuola Normale Superiore for making the workshop possible. Its success was ensured by the active presence of a number of scholars who do not contribute to this volume, but presented or commented on papers, chaired sessions, or took part in the general discussion. They are: Silvia Berti, Giancarlo Casale, Valentina Lepri, Michele Olivari, Géraud Poumarède, Adriano Prosperi, Maria Elena Severini, Vasileios Syros, Alberto Tonini and Andrea Trentini. At the same time we also wish to express our gratitude to Muzaffar Alam, Nergiz Yılmaz Aydoğdu, Carlo Ginzburg, Kaya Şahin and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, who joined this book project at a later stage.

We owe the opportunity and honour to publish this volume with Palgrave Macmillan to the generous interest of Peter Cary and Molly Beck, Commissioning Editors for History. We could not have desired

better support than that Jade Moulds and Oliver Dyer, Assistant Editors for History, provided, or for greater patience on their part. They all made our editorial work a real pleasure.

The reference edition used in this volume for Machiavelli's writings in English translation is *The Chief Works and Others*, edited and translated by Allan H. Gilbert, 3 vols. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1989). Transliteration of Ottoman Turkish, Arabic and Persian follows the Library of Congress system, except Muzaffar Alam's and Sanjay Subrahmanyam's chapter, which uses the Steingass system. Special thanks to Elisabetta Benigni, Yasemin Köle and Kaya Şahin for their linguistic assistance.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Reorienting Machiavelli

Lucio Biasiori and Giuseppe Marcocci

One day, sometime in the second half of the sixteenth century, the Mughal emperor Akbar the Great (r. 1556–1605) was presented with a dilemma. The arrival of a tall, blond young man from Europe did not pass unnoticed in Fatehpur Sikri, the city in which the Mughal court was located at that time. Somehow, the stranger managed to gain access to Akbar, telling him an extraordinary tale. The emperor found himself in a quandary: should he believe the unexpected guest, or put him to death as an insolent trickster? It was not only the letter that the visitor bore, in which Queen Elizabeth I of England (r. 1558–1603) proposed an alliance with the Mughal emperor in order to put a stop to the spread of Spanish Jesuits in Asia, that unsettled Akbar; even more disturbing was the stranger's claim to be the emperor's very own relation. It was on that occasion that Akbar learnt that, in fact, his grandfather Bābur (1483–1530), the first Mughal emperor (r. 1526–1530), had a sister, whose trace had been lost, and then even her memory. This sister's name was

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Qara Köz, but the European young man, who was actually a Florentine by the name of Niccolò Vespucci, knew her as Angelica. Qara Köz/Angelica had been kidnapped by an Uzbek warlord and, after various vicissitudes in which she changed hands, brought to the court of the shah of Persia. From there she was sent to Istanbul, after which she had been accompanied to Florence by Antonino Argalia, a condottiero who had made his fortune in the service of the Ottoman Empire under the name of Pasha Avcalia the Turk. As a young man in his native city of Florence, Argalia had been close friends with Niccolò “il Machia”—Machiavelli, the future author of *The Prince*—and Ago (Agostino) Vespucci, a cousin of the celebrated Amerigo, from whom the New World discovered by Christopher Columbus was to take its name a few years later. This very Niccolò Vespucci, who in the second half of the sixteenth century entwined the threads of this account before a disoriented Akbar, was the son of Angelica and her last lover, Ago Vespucci. Thus, the double life of Qara Köz directly linked the greatest Mughal emperor to Machiavelli’s Florence and, through Amerigo Vespucci, to the discovery of America.

This bizarre story does not originate from some archival source. It is actually the web of relations that provides the basis for the plot of Salman Rushdie’s novel *The Enchantress of Florence* (2008), a title that alludes to Qara Köz, alias Angelica.¹ The work blends fictional and factual elements, in a continuous flow of names, pseudonyms, places, digressions and fragmentary tales.² A case in point is Niccolò “il Machia”, a character modelled on the historical figure of the famous Florentine secretary—including his daily tiffs with his wife Marietta. Niccolò is presented as a man who fully identifies with the political life of his city, which Rushdie reveals chiefly through his eyes. Here we have a sympathetically portrayed Machiavelli, the author aiming to redeem his image from the centuries-old stratification of stereotypes that have made his name a “synonym for deviousness, cynicism and realpolitik”.³

Rushdie’s is only one of a long series of representations of Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) that have moulded his myth. At the same time, the novel outlines a framework of increasing exchanges and connections on a Eurasian scale, with significant links to America, which has been neglected as a means of more adequately situating Machiavelli’s writings in the historical context of their production and reception. Clearly, Rushdie is interested in finding a literary device to establish a relation between two ideal settings for his postmodern novel: the Mughal court, which was famous for its religious tolerance at the time of Akbar, and

Renaissance Florence. The present volume, by contrast, while offering a reconstruction that considers the premises and circulation of Machiavelli's literary output in a geography of cross-cultural interactions not so different from Rushdie's, replaces fiction with philology and historical research.

Reorienting Machiavelli entails restoring the centrality of his encounter with Islam and the East, a term packed with implications. Here, we use the phrase to refer to the productive intersection of the physical and political reality of Asia with the vague knowledge of it shared by many, although not all, of the Europeans who wrote about it in the early modern period. In those centuries of broadening geographical perspective, Machiavelli's works emerged as a much more effective tool to compare events and processes on a world scale than has been previously recognised. Furthermore, comparison with other cultures and traditions increasingly helped those writings to escape the "black legend" surrounding them and, among other things, make their way in eighteenth century Europe. As this volume demonstrates, reflection on Machiavelli himself was transformed by the contact of his writings with Islam and the East. Taking into account these features of the Machiavellian legacy allows us to understand in a less linear and teleological way his crucial contribution to the foundations of modern political thought, which is typically reduced to a process entirely limited to the West.⁴ Moreover, careful scrutiny of evidence found in Machiavelli's work of interest in Islam and the East, as well as a recreation of significant fragments of their reception, demonstrate the extent to which *The Prince* and Machiavelli's other compositions can be read as pieces of a wider Eurasian mosaic. Between the late Middle Ages and the early modern period, this mosaic was already characterised by incessant political communication across linguistic, cultural and religious borders.

We seek to reclaim the complex and multiform nature of Machiavelli's works, with respect to their origins, targets and spread. Moreover, we wish to bring to light the multiplicity of possible readings that his pages have suggested over the centuries. To do so, we must move beyond the simplifications that even today reduce Machiavelli's thought to a flat anthology of maxims for governance, or, worse still, wrongly present him as a theorist of the supposed superiority of western values now threatened by an unavoidable "clash of civilizations" whose ugliest face is Daesh.⁵

Hence, this volume takes a different tack. The substance of Machiavelli's ideas cannot be encapsulated in phrases and slogans, and the rich reserve of references found on his pages has hardly been fully exploited. Moreover, if his writings quickly circulated round the globe, albeit through tortuous paths that, in the main, await reconstruction, this was partly due to his claims concerning Muslim powers. These are discussed here as manifestations of a shared political and cultural space with the Mediterranean at the centre, but also encompassing the main states and kingdoms in Europe. In other words, we aim to rethink Machiavelli within an open and global Renaissance, which was the out-growth of interactions with a variety of cultures excluded from the traditional interpretation of it as a quintessentially European movement.⁶ We also hope to re-establish the connections between Machiavelli's reflections and the Islamic world, which predate by several centuries the translation of his compositions in north Africa, the Middle East and south Asia.⁷

Recent scholarship has signalled the continuity that existed between Renaissance Europe and the Islamic world.⁸ Yet this important revision has thus far failed to assign a place either to political thought or to Machiavelli, who lived in an epoch marked by the Ottoman advance in the Mediterranean and the emergence of two other Muslim empires—the Safavid Empire in Persia and the Mughal Empire in India.⁹ As Margaret Meserve has aptly observed, “thinking about Turks without thinking of and objecting to their religion was something that few humanists were willing or even able to attempt. Machiavelli was probably the first to do so in total seriousness”.¹⁰ Indeed, Machiavelli does this with every political configuration pertaining to the Muslim world.

Meserve rightly considers Chapter 4 of *The Prince*.¹¹ There we find a comparison between the Ottoman Empire and France, significantly inserted after mention of the eastern conquests of Alexander the Great, a key figure in the pantheon of shared political references in Eurasian culture. Machiavelli contrasts the “monarchy of the Turk”, “governed by one ruler” while “the others are his servants” and therefore more difficult to gain but easier to hold, with the French Kingdom, whose ruler “is placed amidst a long-established multitude of lords acknowledged by their own subjects and loved by them”, making it a princedom easy to gain but difficult to hold.¹² And if the alliance between these two powers in the following decades may also be seen as transferring to reality Machiavelli’s pragmatic approach to the Ottoman Empire, without any

negative connotation as a religious enemy, it is no accident that original readings of references to the Islamic world found in *The Prince* and the *Discourses on Livy* emerged in sixteenth century French culture.¹³

More generally, despite an intermittently intense military confrontation between Christian Europe and the new Ottoman power, from the sixteenth century on the calls for crusading became more and more rhetorical, leading to a reshaping of relations in ways that usually went beyond religious war.¹⁴ This shift as regards the Islamic world is also demonstrated by Machiavelli's treatment of the Mamluk Sultanate, which was to collapse before the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 1517. In Chapter 19 of *The Prince*, concerning the manner in which its ruler was elected, the Mamluk regime is considered together with "the Christian papacy, which cannot be called either a hereditary principedom or a new one, because the descendants of the old prince are not his heirs and do not rule by inheritance".¹⁵

Religion is without question a major preoccupation in Machiavelli's political thought, both as an instrument of rulership (in *The Prince*) and for its contribution to civic cohesion and the impulse to perform valorous acts in war (especially in the *Discourses*). Yet rather than Christianity, Machiavelli had in mind the ancient religion of the Romans. Partly for this reason, it was the *Discourses*, thanks to the continuity it suggests between ancient Romans and modern Ottomans, that was a watershed in European thinking on the Islamic empires and, in particular, "the ruler of Turkey" who, as Machiavelli writes in a poem written around 1522, "sharpens his weapons (*auzza l'armi*)"—a reference to the threatening intentions of Sultan Süleymān (r. 1520–1566), who in the next few years laid siege to Vienna (1529), after inflicting severe defeats on the army of the Holy Roman Empire.¹⁶ More than in *The Prince*, which does however show admiration for the unity of the Ottoman army ("anyone who assails the Turk", one reads in Chapter 4, "must reckon on finding a united country and must depend more on his forces than on revolt by others"), it is in the *Discourses* that the description of the wars waged by the Ottomans, reinforced by detailed reference to recent episodes, thanks to the information that Machiavelli gathered from some "who come from his land", gains in depth.¹⁷ Specifically, the idea of continuity between the military valour of the Romans and the Ottomans was plainly advanced. This notion was especially shocking in the context of Renaissance competition among the major European powers for the legacy of the greatness of Rome. For instance, in Chapter 30 of Book

I it is said that “a prince (...) should go personally on his campaigns, as at first the Roman emperors did, as in our times the Turk does, and as prudent rulers always have done and now do”.¹⁸ Or, Chapter 19 of Book I praises the alternation of princes who love war or peace, embodied by the succession of the Ottoman sultans Mehmed II, Bāyezīd II and Selīm I, “the present ruler”, because it would confirm that “after an excellent prince a weak prince can maintain himself. (...) So those princes are weak who do not give constant attention to war”: it was the same model, Machiavelli argues immediately after, that had made the birth of the Roman power possible, since “the ability (*virtù*) of Romulus” was followed by “the arts of peace” of Numa Pompilius, and then by the “courage (*ferocità*)” of Tullus Hostilius.¹⁹

The association between the Romans and the Ottomans, particularly between their military successes, was picked up in the *Commentario de le cose de' turchi* by the Italian humanist Paolo Giovio, issued in 1532, the year after the *Discourses*, by the same publisher, Antonio Blado in Rome. Machiavelli’s dig about the religion of the Romans that, though false and contrary to Christianity, led their captains and soldiers to esteem “the honor of the world” and to be “fiercer in their actions” (Book II, Chapter 2) and Giovio’s on “military discipline”—“regulated with such justice and severity by the Turks that we may say that theirs surpasses that of the ancient Greeks and the Romans”, thus making them “better than our soldiers”—provoked irritated responses and vibrant debate. This association of the Ottomans with the Romans was also taken up by other authors in sometimes surprising ways.²⁰ More generally, it left a lasting mark on the political culture of the early modern world, revealing, as John Najemy noted several years ago, how unfounded are those interpretations that highlight the supposedly central role of Machiavelli in elaborating an idea of Europe by contrast with Asia, fostered by the opposition between the historical trajectory of the former, characterised by the presence of many small states fighting each other, and the latter, distinguished by the appearance of great empires.²¹

If it was precisely the positive opinion on the Ottoman Empire and its association with ancient Rome that caused intense and contrasting reactions, that is because it hit where it hurts those Iberian humanists who were celebrating the construction of the global empires of Portugal and Spain.²² Readers of this volume need not, then, be surprised to learn that the earliest documented reading and possession of Machiavelli’s work in America, in the late sixteenth century, was profoundly related to the

debate about the “Turk”, which in the following decades was to become the main term of reference through which the other Islamic empires were observed and understood—and sometimes openly admired—by European authors. In this way, Machiavelli’s writings, and *The Prince* in particular, started circulating across the Islamic world well before their earliest translations, from the late eighteenth century on, with notable results on both the glossary and the categories adopted to express his ideas, as well as their effects on the making of modern Muslim political thought.

The current volume is divided into three sections, each of which consists of three chapters. The contributing authors, who were given wide latitude with regard to approach, produced a compelling range of studies, from the history of reading to the analysis of the translations, the investigation of the textual interpolations and reversals, but also exercises of comparison between Machiavelli and his contemporaries.

The first section of the volume (*From Readings to Readers*) probes the link between some Arabic backgrounds of Machiavelli’s education and the reception of his writings by authors who dealt with Islam and the Ottoman Empire after him. *The Prince* was greatly indebted to the most widespread Pseudo-Aristotelian work in late medieval Europe, the *Kitāb sirr al-asrār*, written in eighth century Syria and translated into Latin and many European languages under the title *Secretum secretorum* (*Secret of Secrets*). Unlike the European tradition of the “mirror for princes” (*specula principum*) and similarly to *The Prince*, in the *Kitāb sirr al-asrār* Aristotle offers to his pupil, the future Alexander the Great, pragmatic advice on the decisions to be made in concrete situations. As Lucio Biasiori demonstrates in his chapter, the presence of this Muslim source in Machiavelli explains some similarities between *The Prince* and Arab political thought, and might also have paved the way for an easier and more penetrating reception of his writings in the Islamic world, where they were not perceived as a radical novelty. In the meantime, they became a point of reference for interpreting and describing the Ottoman Empire and other Muslim powers, interacting with works that seemingly belonged to very different cultural and political traditions. If we follow this thread, moving from Machiavelli’s readings to the writings by readers of Machiavelli, we can observe to what extent they recovered and developed the cross-cultural comparative potential of *The Prince* and the *Discourses*. Machiavelli’s brief but insightful remarks on political, administrative and military aspects of the Islamic world provoked

lively debate and sharp reactions in Italy and Spain—a land where a deadly attack on the medieval coexistence among the three religions of the Book (Christianity, Judaism and Islam) had been launched by King Ferdinand II of Aragon (r. 1479–1516), whom Machiavelli famously describes as the boldest monarch of his times, acting under the “cloak of religion”, as he stresses in Chapter 21 of *The Prince*.²³ In his chapter, Vincenzo Lavenia investigates this line in the sixteenth century reception of Machiavelli by the Italian humanist Paolo Giovio. A possible acquaintance of the Florentine secretary, Giovio allows us to connect the historical context in which Machiavelli lived with the earliest reaction to his writings. Giovio’s importance consists in having grasped Machiavelli’s ambivalent attitude regarding the Ottomans, which he transformed into a more general position towards the complex relations between politics and religion, as well as between just war and empire, in early modern Europe.

There were also a number of Italian and French readers of Machiavelli who variously readapted his teachings to many questions. In his chapter, Carlo Ginzburg tracks the re-appropriation of *The Prince* and, above all, of the *Discourses* by sixteenth century French antiquarians, establishing how their study of classical antiquity—considered as early ethnography, following in the footsteps of Arnaldo Momigliano—extensively drew on Machiavelli’s comparative approach. Although its specific focus is not the Islamic world, this chapter is a cornerstone of the volume, since it demonstrates that the intersection of Machiavelli’s writings with the reflection on the New World shaped a fresh attitude towards cultural diversity, which also encompassed the Muslims. This new trend was characterised by the use of Machiavelli’s remarks on the Romans as a term of comparison not only for judging and, sometimes, condemning or rejecting political and religious novelties emerging from the newly explored lands, but also for deciphering beliefs and customs in empires with which centuries-old relations, more or less hostile, existed. The creative recovery of Machiavelli’s writings by European humanists, missionaries and travellers, in order to establish comparisons, particularly with Islamic powers, is the main topic of the second section of the volume (*Religions and Empires*). The application of quotations and the rephrasing of Machiavelli’s statements and themes to the Muslim world are considered as manifestations of the global spread of his works and ideas. An early example concerns the first translation of the Qur’ān in a European vernacular language by Giovanni Battista Castrodardo, which is included in the *Alcorano di Macometto*, published in Venice by Andrea Arrivabene

in 1547. In his chapter, Pier Mattia Tommasino assesses the influence of the portrait of Muḥammad as an ‘armed prophet’, derived from a particular reading of *The Prince*, on this version of the Qur’ān, understanding it as a more general turning point in the European representation of the founder of Islam. Such a process, which involved humanists and translators before and after Machiavelli, paralleled the assimilation of Ottoman sultans to Roman emperors, which marked some political circles at the time of Süleymān, reaffirming significant cultural connections across the Mediterranean. While in Istanbul the Caesarisation of the sultan became a tool of legitimization for the Ottoman power, in the Italian peninsula Muḥammad’s assimilation to a wise lawgiver prepared the ground for a new, more positive attitude towards the figure of the prophet, who had hitherto been considered either a trickster or a heretic.

The Machiavellian Muḥammad marked a turning point in the long tradition of his legend in Europe, intersecting themes and aspirations circulating at the court of the Ottoman sultan. But when Jesuit missionaries appeared before the Mughal emperor Jahangir in the early seventeenth century, they could not resist the temptation to insert a substantial number of passages from the dedication of *The Prince* to Lorenzo de’ Medici, Duke of Urbino, in the Persian version of a political treatise that one of them, Jerónimo Xavier, wrote in collaboration with Mulla ‘Abdus Sattar ibn Qasim Lahauri. As Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam reveal in their chapter, that work, titled *Ādāb al-Saltanat* (“Manual for Kings”) and replete with references to episodes of Eurasian history, then follows a path very different from that of Machiavelli, trying to provide Jahangir with an exemplar of a pious prince. This treatise contains our first evidence of passages derived from *The Prince* in a text written in a Muslim land. Therefore, it can be seen as a variation on the equivocal literature produced at the time in Europe by prominent members of the Society of Jesus, who were engaged in confuting Machiavelli without wholly repudiating the ideas and questions on which he had so deeply left his mark in the political culture of the period.

The dissemination of Machiavelli’s writings following the threads of their multiple connections with the Islamic world was not restricted to north Africa and Asia, but took on a global character as early as the sixteenth century, again by virtue of the magnetic attraction of their pages on the Turk. In his chapter, Giuseppe Marcocci determines that it was precisely the association of Machiavelli’s scattered reflections on the colonies and his insights into the Ottoman Empire that facilitated the

recovery of his works along the itineraries of the Iberian explorations. Thus, after the early debate in the 1530 and 1540s about the provocative statement that the Romans owed their greatness to their “false religion” and the modern heirs of their military valour were not the Christian, but the Turkish soldiers, we can track traces of the reading of Machiavelli’s works on a global scale. These range from the peculiar ideas about the Ottoman sultan expressed by Raffaele Olivi, a Florentine settler in late sixteenth century Brazil, to the Venetian Nicolò Manuzzi’s intimate description of the Mughal court, along the lines of the pages in *The Prince* on the “monarchy of the Turk”, provided in the various drafts of the *Storia del Mogol*, which he composed in India in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

Not only European authors, however, used Machiavelli to interpret, or misinterpret, Islam and the East, as the third and final section of this volume (*Beyond Orientalism*) posits, offering a major contribution to the study of cross-cultural political thought in the early and late modern period. A bureaucrat and author of historical works, Celâlzâde Muştafâ (ca. 1490–1567) was a contemporary of Machiavelli, and together they can be considered as a case of early modern “parallel lives”. This is what Kaya Şahin affirms in his chapter. The similarities (and differences) between these two figures have escaped the notice of those who study them separately, confining them to distinct cultural traditions. But a comprehensive exploration of individual trajectories as a special resource for global history makes it possible to restore many connections between the topics discussed by Muştafâ and Machiavelli, as well as the solutions they proposed.

The rapid circulation of Machiavelli’s writings across the Islamic world was followed by their translation into Ottoman Turkish and Arabic from the second half of the eighteenth century on, thus contributing to the emergence of a new political vocabulary in the modern Islamic world. In her chapter, Nergiz Yılmaz Aydoğdu presents the results of her discovery of the first translation of *The Prince* into Ottoman Turkish among the manuscripts of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library (Istanbul). The probable fruit of collaboration between a dragoman called Herbert (to be identified with Thomas Herbert, a descendant of a Catholic family long since emigrated from the British Isles to Constantinople) and a Turkish assistant, the work was written in a period of crisis for the Ottoman Empire, which had been weakened by the war against Russia. The quest for political and military renewal drove Sultan Muştafâ III

(r. 1757–1774) to encourage a version of *Anti-Machiavel* (1740), a refutation of *The Prince* written by King Frederick II of Prussia with Voltaire's help. The fact that *Anti-Machiavel* includes the text it criticises made its translation Machiavelli's official entrance to the Ottoman world. A close reading of this manuscript discloses a complex adaptation of *The Prince* to the Ottoman political reality: the effort to make this treatise comprehensible to its new Turkish readers is evident in the translation of keywords such as “prince”, “state”, or *virtù*.

A second, fundamental step was the first Arabic translation of *The Prince*, conceived in 1832 at the court of Muḥammad ‘Alī (r. 1769–1849) in Cairo, which was still under Ottoman authority. According to Elisabetta Benigni's reconstruction, the translation was connected to Muḥammad ‘Alī's effort to modernize Egypt through a series of economic, political and cultural reforms that aimed to emulate those witnessed by Europe, and ought to be understood in the context of the current Mediterranean spread of discourse about the idea of the nation in the aftermath of Napoleonic expeditions. A careful analysis of this translation reveals that the attempt to adapt *The Prince* to the first half of nineteenth century was less determined than in the Ottoman Turkish case, although Islamic political thought in Arabic confronted completely new concepts, starting from that of “nation”, which Machiavelli himself contributed to circulating. In so doing, the basis was also laid for the rise of nationalism across the Muslim world, which in the past century has contributed to the emergence of an anti-colonial resistance, but also to the return to the rhetoric of clash between West and East, whose effects are before us.

Our proposal to reorient Machiavelli, thus, can be read as an invitation to recover historical knowledge concerning the constitutive contribution made by the author of *The Prince* to the emergence of a new approach to political and military issues in the Islamic world. Such an inquiry will take the many divergent directions of a largely forgotten circulation and reception.

NOTES

1. S. Rushdie (2008), *The Enchantress of Florence* (London: Random House).
2. For a short analysis of the novel see D.C.R.A. Goonetilleke (2010), *Salman Rushdie*, 2nd ed. (Hounds mills and New York: Palgrave Macmillan): 177–184.
3. We quote Rushdie's words from an interview about his novel, by J. Kidd, “A Machiavellian obsession”, *The Jerusalem Post*, 13 June 2008, 26.

4. The reference is to Q. Skinner (1978), *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2 vols. (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press). On this point see also D. Armitage (2013), *Foundations of Modern International Thought* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press), 3–8.
5. Samuel P. Huntington never actually quotes Machiavelli in *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996), but the title of the book review by W. Gungwu, “A Machiavelli for Our Times”, *The National Interest*, 46, Winter 1996–1997, 69–73, is telling.
6. Rather than stretching improperly the problematic notion of Renaissance, as suggested by J. Goody (2010), *Renaissances: The One or the Many?* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press), we aim to show that its historical manifestations owe many features to the interaction with non-European cultures.
7. This volume is also a contribution to the study of the translations of *The Prince*. On this issue see R. De Pol (ed.) (2010), *The First Translations of Machiavelli's Prince: From the Sixteenth to the First Half of the Nineteenth Century* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi).
8. Among the others, see G. MacLean (ed.) (2005), *Re-Orienting the Renaissance: Cultural Exchanges with the East* (Hounds mills and New York: Palgrave Macmillan), N. Matar (2009), *Europe through Arab Eyes, 1578–1727* (New York: Columbia University Press), and A. Contadini and C. Norton (eds) (2013), *The Renaissance and the Ottoman World* (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate). For an overview with a special focus on Italy see F. Trivellato (2010), “Renaissance Italy and the Muslim Mediterranean in Recent Historical Work”, *Journal of Modern History* 82, no. 1, 127–155.
9. A case in point is the presentation of Machiavelli's thought alongside that of Erasmus and Luther, in A. Pippidi (2012), *Visions of the Ottoman World in Renaissance Europe* (London: Hurst): 65–118. Despite its recent publication, the book is heavily indebted to the old literature about European representations of the Turk. On the three Islamic empires see D.E. Steusand (2011), *Islamic Gunpowder Empires: Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals* (Boulder: Westview Press).
10. M. Meserve (2008), *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press): 9. See also N. Bisaha (2004), *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press): 177–178.
11. It is the author herself who clarifies it in the endnote. See *ibidem*, 261: “In his account of Ottoman governance in *The Prince*, Chapter 4”.

12. N. Machiavelli (1989), *The Chief Works and Others*, ed. and trans. Allan Gilbert, 3 vols. (Durham and London; Duke University Press): Vol. I, 21.
13. For a general overview see S. Anglo (2005), *Machiavelli, the First Century: Studies in Enthusiasm, Hostility, and Irrelevance* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press): 325–373. Machiavelli's name does not appear in the recent book by P. Barthe (2016), *French Encounters with the Ottomans, 1510–1560* (London and New York: Routledge).
14. G. Poumarède (2004), *Pour en finir avec la croisade: Mythes et réalités de la lutte contre les Turcs aux XVI^e et XVII^e siècles* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France). Of course, a fundamental sphere was that of the relations with the Ottoman Empire, which contributed to the emergence of a new diplomacy in Europe: D. Goffman (2007), "Negotiating with the Renaissance State: The Ottoman Empire and the New Diplomacy", in: V.H. Aksan and D. Goffman (eds), *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press): 61–74.
15. Machiavelli, *The Chief Works*, Vol. I, 76.
16. Ibidem, Vol. II, 880. The translation has been slightly modified.
17. Ibidem, Vol. I, 21 (*The Prince*) and 508 (*Discourses*), respectively. Machiavelli's informant is likely to be identified with his nephew Giovanni Vernacci.
18. Ibidem, Vol. I, 260.
19. Ibidem, Vol. I, 245.
20. P. Giovio (2005), *Commentario de le cose de' turchi*, ed. L. Michelacci (Bologna: Clueb): 169: "La disciplina militar è con tanta giustitia et severità regulata da' turchi che si può dir che avanzino quella de gli antichi greci et romani". Machiavelli is quoted from his *The Chief Works*, Vol. I, 331.
21. J.M. Najemy (2009), "Machiavelli between East and West", in: D. Ramada Curto et al. (eds), *From Florence to the Mediterranean and Beyond: Essays in Honour of Anthony Molho* (Florence: Olschki): 127–145: 128–129. In particular, Najemy is thinking of the arguments presented by F. Chabod (1961), *Storia dell'idea d'Europa*, ed. E. Sestan and A. Saitta (Bari: Laterza): 49–52, and, more recently, by T. Hentsch (1992), *Imagining the Middle East*, trans. F.A. Reed (Montreal: Black Rose Books): 63–65.
22. A. Prosperi (2010), "La religione, il potere, le élites: Incontri italo-spagnoli nell'età della Controriforma", in his *Eresie e devozioni*, 3 vols. (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura): Vol. I, 61–85.
23. Machiavelli, *The Chief Works*, Vol. I, 81.

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PART I

From Readings to Readers

CHAPTER 2

Islamic Roots of Machiavelli's Thought? *The Prince* and the *Kitāb sirr al-asrār* from Baghdad to Florence and Back

Lucio Biasiori

“THE MOST POPULAR BOOK OF THE MIDDLE AGES”?

Many scholars have speculated on the resemblance between Islamic and Machiavellian political thought. Answers have been quite varied, however. Some historians have been satisfied with nationalistic ones: for instance, translating into French the *Raqā'iq al-hilāl fī daqā'iq al-hiyāl* (“Book of Stratagems”, late thirteenth century), the French-Lebanese intellectual René Khawam has stated that this work proves the political ability of Arabic politicians one century before Machiavelli.¹ Others, like Jocelyne Dakhlia, have simply dismissed the problem, deciding “not to dwell on the pertinence of such an assimilation”.² More usefully, Antony Black has looked for “Machiavellian ideas in the Muslim Advice to Kings literature”, assuming that they “derived from Indo-Iranian sources”, but has concluded that they were unknown to Machiavelli.³ More recently, Linda Darling has tried to overcome the *impasse* by attributing the similarities between western and eastern mirrors for princes—as works giving

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advice to kings were called in Europe—“to their common origins and trajectory, however improbable that may be”.⁴ This chapter will take up her invitation by tracking as accurately as possible one of these trajectories. It will show that Machiavelli came into contact with the Islamic political tradition, since one of the Arab mirrors for princes, the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Kitāb sīr al-āsrār*, was extremely popular in Europe, under the Latin title *Secretum secretorum* and left significant traces both in *The Prince* and in its reception.⁵

Thanks to the works of Mahmoud Manzalaoui, Mario Grignaschi, Charles B. Schmitt, and Steven Williams, we are well informed as to the intricate process that turned the *Kitāb sīr al-āsrār* into the *Secretum secretorum*. From an Aristotelian bedrock, a first version was probably written in eighth-century Syria under the Umayyad dynasty. Then, between 850 and 900, Yahyā (or Yūhannā) ibn al-Bīrūq, a scholar from Baghdad of likely Byzantine descent—his name meaning John the son of the Patrician or of the Patriarch, as in the church hierarchy—and belonging to a circle of translators of Greek philosophical works for Abbasid sultans in Baghdad, wrote a translation “from *yunani* (Greek) into *rumi* (Syriac?) and then finally into Arabic”.⁶ This version contained political advices purportedly given by Aristotle to his pupil Alexander the Great in the form of a letter.⁷ For the next two centuries, this stage of the text was continuously reworked and transfigured by the insertion of pieces concerning a great number of topics, and in particular physiognomy, medicine and occult science. The *Kitāb sīr al-āsrār* thus became something more than a mirror for princes: it was a sort of encyclopaedia of the pseudo-sciences that Arabs attributed to Aristotle.⁸

It was in this form that the work reached European readers: a short version was translated into Latin around 1125 by John of Seville (Johannes Hispalensis), probably a Mozarabic clerk, who dedicated it to Queen Teresa of Portugal. Almost a century later, the clerk Philip of Tripoli translated it in its entirety. From that moment on, the *Secret of Secrets* became, if not “the most popular book of the Middle Ages”,⁹ surely “the most widely distributed of all spurious Aristotelian works”,¹⁰ with over 500 manuscript copies in European vernacular languages and 34 printed editions between 1472 and 1540 in Latin, Italian, German, English and French. In this second life, the work had a very intricate philological transmission, circulating as it did in different languages and forms. This is particularly true for its Italian reception, which is characterised by an extreme variety of versions and contents.¹¹

In Renaissance Florence, where Machiavelli lived and wrote, the *Secret of Secrets* was extremely widespread: today 23 manuscripts are preserved, although they were undoubtedly more numerous at the time. Besides the variety in content, the work often circulated with a different title: *De regimine principum* or *regum*.¹² Far from referring only to the political dimension of the work, the word *regimen* also comprises medical precepts, for “no object of this world or of the next can be obtained without strength and strength depends upon health”.¹³ The Latin word *regimen* could actually refer both to a political order and to an alimentary diet, a dual meaning that the Italian *regime* and the French *régime* still cover.¹⁴ Although its fortune declined towards the mid-sixteenth century,¹⁵ the great number of topics that were tackled in the work continued to influence generations of readers at every social level: some elements of it were, for instance, incorporated into the books of secrets, collections of recipes to produce medicines, heal diseases and, more generally, control the forces of nature.¹⁶

FROM THE RECEPTION TO THE TEXTS: CONNECTING *THE PRINCE* AND *KITĀB SIRR AL-ASRĀR*

The decline of the *Secret of Secrets* and the synchronous rise of *The Prince* made the comparison between the two works virtually impossible for almost four centuries, until the beginning of the last century, when Allan Gilbert wrote an essay on the general influence of the former text.¹⁷ Ten years later, Gilbert published his book on the forerunners of *The Prince*, where he rapidly postulated an indirect influence of the *Secret of Secrets* on Machiavelli.¹⁸ This brilliant hypothesis was rejected the year after by another Gilbert, Felix, who maintained the idea of an influence of the *Secret of Secrets* on medieval mirrors for princes, but ruled it out from Machiavelli's horizon on account of the frequent criticism of its Aristotelian paternity, which eventually undermined its authority.¹⁹ One could have objected that Machiavelli was a man who did not care about the intellectual origin of an argument. Writing to his friend Francesco Vettori, he metaphorically answered against every authority principle, “*io non beo paesi*”—literally “I do not drink lands”, meaning that he cared about the content of a bottle of wine rather than about its provenance (in a letter dated 29 April 1513). Nonetheless, Felix Gilbert's authoritative statement led to an almost total avoidance of any connection

between the two texts in scholarly works and commentaries. As a result, it is nowadays unusual to entertain the possibility that Machiavelli might have read the *Secret of Secrets*, for it implies situating the roots of a milestone of western political thought in an unfamiliar milieu and thus it could appear pointlessly provocative or anachronistic. Instead, the presence of this Islamic contribution in Machiavelli's works simply places him in a historically consistent context and at the same time appears to cast doubt on the idea that his thought had exclusively European origins.²⁰ Consider a man from a generation close to Machiavelli's, the Florentine Migliore Cresci. He dedicated to Cosimo I de' Medici, Duke of Tuscany, the *Vita del Principe*, a patchwork of two works that he evidently considered perfectly compatible, namely *The Prince* and the *Secret of Secrets*.²¹ In the *Vita del Principe*, one could find biblical figures (Moses and Melchizedek), and political men of ancient (Lycurgus, Numa) and medieval times (Constantine, Charlemagne) compared with "the false Muhammad" leader of "the Turks".²² How was this comparative use of Machiavelli possible?

During the period that has recently been dubbed the "first global age", Machiavelli, before being turned into either a monster of iniquity or a brilliant discoverer of political truths, could be read as an author having significant connections with a multiplicity of cultures. For instance, the first generation of European readers of his works was ready to interpret some passages for understanding and supporting the contact of Europe with the New Worlds.²³ This is particularly evident in the country where Machiavelli's works aroused the most vivid reactions, namely France.²⁴ The first French translation of the *Discourses on Livy*, that by Jacques Gohory, bears visible traces of this overlapping between the reflection on Machiavelli and European overseas exploration. Not only did Gohory translate the *Historia general y natural de las Indias* (1535) by the Spanish imperial official and chronicler Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo,²⁵ but, when dedicating, in 1544, the translation of the first book of Machiavelli's *Discourses* to the bishop of Évreux, Gabriel Le Veneur, he also points out the potential of this work for a comparative approach to politics:

Firstly, he reports in a few words the singularity of Roman history according to Livy's description. Then he vividly discusses, on the one side and on the other, the deepest matters concerning it, finally solving them with some high political paradox. By doing so, he completely discovers the

secrets of this great government that has conquered and subjugated the world. But, when the occasion is offered, he talks about Egyptians, Greeks, Turks, Frenchmen, Germans, Spaniards, Englishmen and especially about the Italian principalities, declaring virtues and vices of all these famous kingdoms and republics. Therefore, these adages are a true mirror of universal history (*ces devis sont un vray miroir de l'histoire universelle*).²⁶

From “the singularity of Roman history”, Machiavelli, dealing with a “government that has conquered and subjugated the world”, moves towards a comparative approach to politics with no spatial or chronological limits. This cross-cultural and cross-temporal comparatism is an attitude that is extensively exploited in the *Secret of Secrets*. The fact that the work was purportedly addressed to Alexander the Great, a king who had extended his conquest on a quasi-universal scale, was of course an important element in this global dimension of political advice. For instance, the *Secret of Secrets* often refers to “the books of the kings of India”, where “it is said that the cause of a monarch ruling his subjects, or being ruled by them, is merely a strong or a weak mind”.²⁷ In other passages, this Asiatic element has a still more Machiavellian aspect: “Know that fear of the king is the peace of the realm. And it is said in the book of the Indians: ‘Let thy fear in their souls be worse than thy sword in their hearts’”.²⁸ Elsewhere, the *Secret of Secrets*—born as it was from “the caliphal elite’s desire to create as comprehensive as possible an account of the world it ruled, its causes and its potentialities”²⁹—explicitly suggests the very same comparison that shaped Gohory’s reading of Machiavelli’s works:

The Rumi say that there is no harm if a king is miserly to himself but liberal to his people. And the Indians say that it is right for a king to be miserly to himself as well as to his people. The Persians contradict the Indians and say that a king ought to be liberal to himself as well as to his people. But all of them agree to this, that to be liberal to himself and miserly to his people is vicious for a king and corrupts his kingdom.³⁰

In Gohory’s interpretation, Machiavelli’s comparative approach exists side by side with his discovery of the secrets of government. Gohory’s words are not just a simple reference to the Tacitean tradition of *arcana imperii*, but they have naturalistic and scientific implications, being rooted in the author’s own interest in alchemy and natural philosophy.³¹ This is evident from Gohory’s dedicatory letter of the French translation

of *The Prince* (1571) to the Italian merchant Giovan Francesco Affaitati from Cremona, a sugar trader between Lisbon and Madeira, also mentioned by him in the *Instruction sur l'herbe petum* (1572), one of the first European treatises on tobacco.³² Differently from the preface of the translation of the *Discourses*, in the dedicatory letter of *Le prince de Nicolas Machiavel secretaire et citoyen florentin*, the secret is no longer that of government but of man, since Machiavelli “seems to have done much more to describe the secrets of the microcosm (as the ancient wise-men called man) in his different humours and in all of his passions and fantasies, than Pliny did in his natural history of the world”. What is, in Gohory’s view, the ingredient allowing Machiavelli to move from the *secrets du gouvernement*—as in the French translation of the *Discourses* of 1544—to the *secrets du microcosme*? Gohory identifies it in Machiavelli’s insistence on free will, “since man by this gift of reason is so subtle that he frustrates the celestial influences and by his free will he frustrates physiognomy, of which I have an ancient book attributed to Aristotle and commented upon by an Arab”.³³

We can be certain that Gohory’s book on physiognomy “attributed to Aristotle and commented upon by an Arab” was precisely the *Secret of Secrets*, which devotes many chapters to the *scientia magna* (“great science”) that infers the character of a man from his external traits.³⁴ Thanks to his insistence on free will, Machiavelli was therefore able to build “an art of the interior anatomy of human behaviors (*un art de l'anatomie interieure des moeurs humaines*)” avoiding that kind of determinism which the *Secret of Secrets* conveys. A mirror for princes with astrological and physiognomical inserts, the *Secret* was read together with *The Prince*, which in turn was considered a sort of modern version of the Pseudo-Aristotelian treatise. Was this interpretation legitimised by the fact that *The Prince* bears visible traces of Machiavelli’s meditation on the *Secret of Secrets*?

As noted by Gohory, Machiavelli’s defence of man’s free will in Chapter 25 of *The Prince* emerges from a close confrontation with the *Secret* that strongly recommends paying attention to astrology, “for although man cannot avoid his fate, yet by knowing it beforehand he prepares himself for it and makes use of the remedies calculated to avert it. As people provide themselves with shelter, fuel, furs, and so on, to defend themselves against the rigours of coming winter”.³⁵ Although Machiavelli slightly changes the example, to that of man damming up the river of Fortune, he agrees with the *Secret*, albeit with that small

difference emphasized by Gohory though: whereas the latter states that “man cannot avoid his fate”, Machiavelli almost equally separates the sphere of human liberty from that of necessity:

As I am well aware, many have believed and now believe human affairs so controlled by Fortune and by God that men with their prudence cannot manage them (...). Nonetheless, in order not to annul our free will, I judge it true that Fortune may be mistress of one half our action but that even she leaves the other half, or almost, under our control. I compare Fortune with one of our destructive rivers which, when it is angry, turns the plains into lakes, throws down the trees and the buildings (...) Yet though such it is, we need not therefore conclude that when the weather is quiet, men cannot take precautions with both embankments and dykes, so that when waters rise, either they go off by a canal or their fury is neither so wild nor so damaging.³⁶

The dialogue between Machiavelli and the *Secret* continues throughout Chapter 25 of *The Prince*:

Limiting myself more to particulars, I say that such princes as I have described live happily today and tomorrow fall without changing their natures or any of their traits (...). We find also that of two cautious men, one carries out his purpose, the other does not. Likewise, we find two men with two different temperaments equally successful, one being cautious and the other impetuous. This results from nothing else than the quality of the times, which is harmonious or not with their procedure.³⁷

Besides the aforementioned necessity for providing shelters against adversity, the distinction between the two temperaments of the prince is also present in the *Secret* and the resemblance between the two texts clearly appears on reading one Italian manuscript version of the *Secret* circulating in Machiavelli's Florence:

The king must think about the future and prudently arrange for cases that are going to happen, so that he can more easily handle adverse events. When the king sees something good or useful, he must do it with discretion, so that he does not appear either lazy or impetuous.³⁸

The choice of a middle way between being lazy and impetuous apparently situates the *Secret* in the Aristotelian tradition, according to which virtue is the composition of two extremes. As we have seen, however,

Alexander's advisor is not who he purports to be, and thus he distances himself from the real Aristotle not only for the boldness of his counsels, but also because he ultimately breaks with the peripatetic golden mean. In fact, he suggests a behavior that is designed to change according to the nature of the adversaries and—exactly as does Machiavelli—the “quality of the time (*qualità de' tempi*)”:

Indians are traitors and deceivers and they have no qualms about it. Persians and Turks are too daring people and highly presumptuous. Fight therefore with each one of these people according to your capacities (...) and show or conceal your works following my advices and according to the quality or disposition of the science of the stars.³⁹

THE *SECRET* AND THE SECRETARY

Machiavelli's contemporaries therefore explicitly considered the *Secret* a relevant interlocutor of the Florentine secretary and recognised in *The Prince* the mark left by this work. But why might Machiavelli have been attracted by a work entitled *Secret of Secrets* and circulating under the name of Aristotle?⁴⁰ At first glance, the answer may seem simple: a man who is considered as being the discoverer of the *arcana imperii* could not escape the influence of a book in which the author “darkly allude[s] to certain prohibited and profound mysteries”.⁴¹ On 12 July 1513, a few months before writing *The Prince*, he wrote to his friend Vettori that “because it is impossible for us to know the secret of princes (*il segreto loro*), we have to judge it from their words, from their actions, and some part of it we imagine”.⁴² Therefore, Machiavelli was fascinated by the presence of a hidden sphere in political actions and a work that promised to reveal it could have been congenial to him.

There was, however, another aspect that might have aroused Machiavelli's interest in the work. The *Secret* was the only book *de regimine principum* that, to borrow Machiavelli's words in Chapter 15 of *The Prince*, places emphasis on the “truth of the matter (*verità effettuale della cosa*)” rather than on “any fanciful notion (*immaginazione di essa*)”. Apart from some passages that aimed at recommending to Alexander the ideal goals of rulership, Aristotle was more concerned with concrete indications for gaining and keeping health and power. The *Secret of Secrets* therefore ought not to be considered strictly as a mirror for princes, but rather an epistolary handbook in which a learned

man explains to a young ruler the secrets of power. Similarly, *The Prince* can be read as “a confidential document which Machiavelli presented to a member of the Medici family” bearing significant traces of a quasi-epistolary form of communication, given the more than 30 times the author appeals to the dedicatee using the second person singular.⁴³ Just one example will be sufficient to demonstrate this family resemblance between the *Secret* and *The Prince*:

How praiseworthy is the method of the Indians, who say in the admonitions to their kings: “The appearance of a king before the common people is detrimental to him and weakens his power”. Therefore, a king should show himself to them only from afar, and always when surrounded by a retinue and guards. Once a year, when the season of assembly comes, he appears before all his people. One of his eloquent ministers stands up before him and delivers a speech in which he praises God and thanks Him for their allegiance to their sovereign. Then he says how well pleasing they are, and how much care is taken on their behalf, and exhorts them to be obedient and warns them against disobedience. He reads their petitions, hears their complaints, dispenses justice, and grants gifts to them. He pardons their sins and makes them feel how near he is to the highest and lowest among them. As he comes out among his people only once in a year and does not obtrude upon them, they remember that as a great event which gave them joy and pleasure. They relate it to their relatives and children, so that their little ones grow up to obey and love him. So he is well spoken of in private and in public, and thus he becomes safe from the rising of parties against him and from the intrigues of the seditious.⁴⁴

From the Indian kings through Pseudo-Aristotle, Machiavelli’s “politics of appearance” came from afar.⁴⁵

“LET ALL THY AFFAIRS BE STRATEGIC AND CUNNING”: WAR AND POLITICS

Allan Gilbert identified the relationship between war and politics as the closest similarity between *The Prince* and the *Secret*. His intuition is right, but since he included the latter in the tradition of the mirror for princes, whose goal was to depict an ideal ruler, the substance of his statement is no longer valid. According to Gilbert, “from the *Secretum secretorum* onward the book of advice to princes assumes that the prince will act as his own general”.⁴⁶ In this regard, *The Prince* is indeed “the typical

book *de regimine principum*"—as the subtitle of Gilbert's book states—since it insists that, in battle, "the wise prince goes in person and himself performs the duties of a general".⁴⁷ On the *Secret of Secrets*, however, Gilbert is wrong, for Aristotle exhorts Alexander "not to take part in battles in person".⁴⁸ Therefore, if Machiavelli ever took the *Secret* into account for this statement, as Gilbert pointed out, he completely turned its source upside down.

Notwithstanding its brilliance, Gilbert's interpretation may now appear flawed because in the 1930s the Arabic origins of the *Secret of Secrets* had not yet been scrutinised. If we encompass the work as part of a larger picture, however, its connection to Machiavelli will appear in a totally different light. Let us take, for instance, the relationship between cruelty and politics—a crucial issue in comparative studies of Eurasian political thought. According to Antony Black, "there are parallels between Irano-Islamic courtly culture and Machiavellism, but their basic approach was different. Sultans might be permitted to use all kinds of deceit and violence, but this was not necessarily perceived as contrary to religion, a deviation from moral norms. Killing and trickery were legitimised in the Quran".⁴⁹ The analysis of the similarities between the *Secret* and *The Prince* provides a different conclusion: the former does not bear any traces of the legitimization of trickery by the Qur'ān (as it purports to be a work by Aristotle); the latter is not necessarily outside of the Christian tradition when it encourages the use of malice. Does not Christ himself recommend being "simple as dove and wise as snake"?⁵⁰ Thinking outside the box, a reader familiar with *The Prince* will recognise the striking similarity between the exhibition of cruelty that Aristotle suggests to Alexander and Machiavelli's description of Cesare Borgia's actions. The family of Machiavelli's friend and mentor Giovanni Gaddi owned a manuscript copy of the *Secretum*, a shorter version of the work containing only moral chapters.⁵¹ Let us read how the lines immediately following the aforementioned passage on a king's exposition in front of the people sound in that version:

And when the people have done such things, the king introduces some wicked men deserving to die and here he let them cruelly be killed so that the people can take example from it and then he pardons the people by lowering taxes and releasing part of their debts. All the people thus run to be under such a king and his realm expands.⁵²

Half a millennium later, on the other side of the Mediterranean, Machiavelli recounts that Cesare Borgia did exactly the same to his minister Ramiro de Lorca:

Because he knew that past severities had made some men hate him, he determined to purge such men's minds and win them over entirely by showing that any cruelty which had gone on did not originate with himself but with the harsh nature of his agent. So getting an opportunity for it, one morning in Cesena he had Messer Remirro laid in two pieces in the public square with a block of wood and a bloody sword near him. The ferocity of this spectacle left those people at the same time gratified and awe-struck.⁵³

How can one explain this resemblance? Apparently, there is no need to assume that Machiavelli read something on the subject, instead of putting down on paper what he saw in person. But this approach does not do justice to the Florentine secretary, whose direct experience was always filtered through his readings. In the opening sentences of his three major works, it is easy to notice a recurrent overlapping between "long experience of the modern things" and "a continual reading of the ancient" (*The Prince*), "what I have seen and read" (*The Art of War*), and even a "continual reading of worldly things" (*the Discourses*), as if the world itself were readable in a way no different from that of a book. The political use of executions is part of what Machiavelli calls the "experience of modern things". The case of Cesare Borgia itself shows, however, that for Machiavelli everyday materials need to be interpreted through "the reading of ancient things" to become part of a political reflection: right after his first meeting with his hero Cesare Borgia on 21 October 1502, Machiavelli asked his best friend Biagio Buonaccorsi for a copy of Plutarch's *Lives*. Biagio replied in harsh terms, telling him to "go to hell" for his continual requests, which were difficult to meet.⁵⁴ But what he mistook for a bibliographical caprice was actually the only way in which his friend could make sense of the extraordinary experience of facing his new prince, attempting to read Cesare Borgia's action in the mirror of his forerunners, including Alexander the Great.

The presence of Aristotle behind Machiavelli's description of the reaction of the people to the execution of Ramiro de Lorca by Cesare Borgia has been correctly emphasized, with a particular focus on the medico-poetical notion of catharsis.⁵⁵ Like spectators of a tragedy, people

watching Ramiro's death experienced an aesthetic and moral purification “through piety and fear” (*Politics*, VI, 1449b). To remain “at the same time gratified and awe-struck”, however, was only the first reaction of the spectators, who from that moment on became Borgia's most faithful subjects. In the face of the threat of death, “all the people *run* to be under such a king” (*Secret of Secrets*), for “each man, seeing himself perishing, lays aside all ambition and gladly runs to obey one he thinks can by means of his ability rescue him” (*Discourses on Livy*, Book III, Chapter 30).⁵⁶

WITH ARISTOTLE BEYOND ARISTOTLE

Chapter 22 of *The Prince* deals with “a prince's confidential officers”, or, according to its Latin title, *De his quos a secretis principes habent* (literally “About the people whom princes have for their secrets”). The *Secret* and *The Prince* start from the same universal truth:

It is written in one of the books of the Persians: A king advised his son saying: ‘Always take counsel’ (*Secret of Secrets*).⁵⁷

A wise prince, then, seeks advice continually (*The Prince*).⁵⁸

Machiavelli and Aristotle also share the consequences of such a general assumption, which are analysed not from the point of view of the ministers, but from that of the prince. Aristotle exhorts Alexander to “never put a minister in the government in your place, for its counsel can ruin and corrupt your regime”.⁵⁹ Machiavelli agrees as to the danger of the prince “turning himself over to a single person—a very prudent man—who entirely controls him; in this case he really could get good advice, but not for long, because that tutor in a short time would take his position away from him”.⁶⁰ Then, Aristotle and Machiavelli explain to Alexander and Lorenzo, respectively, “the methods of trying thy minister” and “how a prince can find out about any minister”⁶¹:

Give him to think that thou standest in need of money – says Aristotle – if he offer to thee his own wealth, and entreat thee to make use of it, be certain that he is truly loyal to thee (...) for verily money is loved by all souls, and no one is willing to sacrifice it for thee unless he prefer thee to himself.⁶²

Also for Machiavelli the love of the minister for the prince has to overcome his self-love.⁶³ He also shares with Aristotle the litmus test for the reliability of the minister, namely the irresistible force of money, “because men forget more quickly the death of a father than the loss of a father’s estate”.⁶⁴ In this matter, however, Machiavelli differs from Aristotle: whereas the latter’s advice is to “examine thy ministers by giving them gifts and presents and whomsoever thou findest greedy thereof he shall be of no good to thee”, Machiavelli advises Lorenzo that “the wise prince, in order to keep the minister good, always has him in mind, honors him, makes him rich, puts him under obligation, gives him his share of honors and offices, so that the minister sees he cannot stand without the prince”.⁶⁵ In this case, Machiavelli is more realistic than Aristotle, who suggests preventing any contact between the minister and money in order to avoid the rise of greed in him. In *The Prince*, the ministers are not to be kept away from money. To hope that they do not want to get wealthy is in vain. The only thing a ruler can do is to show that the ministers are enriched thanks solely to the prince.

Another aspect in which Machiavelli undoubtedly draws on the *Secret of Secrets* is the discussion on generosity or avarice of the prince. As is well-known, the Aristotelian tradition identifies virtue as a middle way between two vices and emphasized the necessity for a balance between two extremes. Consistently with this approach, the aim of the work is “to explain liberality and avarice, and to describe the evils of excess in liberality and those of deficiency in it”.⁶⁶ Pseudo-Aristotle, however, differs from the real Aristotle and soon abandons this middle path, dealing with the risk that an excess of liberality might lead the king to take “what is in the hands of the people”. However, being liberal is always better than being stingy, since avarice is “a name which is unworthy of kings and of a state”. Although the tone of the argument is ultimately moralistic, the author of the *Kitāb sirr al-asrār* has an original position in the peripatetic tradition, since he focuses on the flaws of excessive liberality, but completely rejects avarice for reasons which have to do with the reputation of the ruler. Machiavelli goes a step further in this progressive erosion of Aristotelianism and in Chapter 16 of *The Prince* completely breaks with it:

Since, then, a prince cannot, without harming himself, make use of this virtue of liberality in such a way that it will be recognised, he does not worry, if he is prudent, about being called stingy; because in the course of

time he will be thought more and more liberal, since his economy makes his income adequate; he can defend himself against anyone who makes war on him; he can carry through enterprises without burdening his people (...). So it is wiser to accept the name of niggard, which produces reproach without hatred, than by trying for the name of free-spender to incur the name of extortioner, which produces reproach with hatred.⁶⁷

As is unanimously recognised by commentators, Machiavelli here is targeting the typically Aristotelian concept of *metriotēs* (balance) between two despicable extremes. In changing the Aristotelian paradigm, he is probably drawing on the figure referred to as Aristotle in the *Secret*. In other words, the reference to the *Secret* can explain Machiavelli's agnostic relationship with Aristotelianism. While the *Secret* starts to erode the Aristotelian paradigm, Machiavelli radicalizes what he read: on the one hand, he agrees as to the necessity of not burdening the people for the sake of liberality; on the other, although he follows Aristotle in the reflection on what "the name of niggard" implies for the relationship between prince and subjects, he turns it upside down: whereas Aristotle judges it unworthy of a ruler, Machiavelli exhorts the prince not to care about it and even to accept it willingly.

MIRRORS FOR PRINCES, MIRRORS FOR CULTURES

Like every study of the sources of a literary work, Machiavelli's creative re-appropriation of a Pseudo-Aristotelian work such as the *Secret of Secrets*, risks being considered nowadays as a peripheral exercise in the field of humanities.⁶⁸ What is then the sense of picking up a hypothesis that Allan Gilbert already put forward 80 years ago and which was soon rejected? First of all, we have tried to do what Gilbert—in a totally different political and scholarly climate—could not do: firstly, the textual tradition of the *Secret of Secrets* has been scrutinised as thoroughly as possible, drawing on the vast number of studies published in the last 30 years; in addition, the Islamic roots of the work have been brought to the surface, as well as the ways in which this element could—consciously or not—have affected Machiavelli and his readers. And yet, all of this could still appear irrelevant for the global reception of Machiavelli's work, which is the topic of this book. Instead, as authors like Jacques Gohory or Migliore Cresci noticed, a part of the content of the *Secret* is incorporated into *The Prince* and is consequently, in a more or less

hidden way, conveyed between the lines of Machiavelli's writings. Therefore, its presence in the background of Machiavelli's work is an element which contributed to the reception of *The Prince* in the Islamic world. This phenomenon was prepared by some textual elements of *The Prince* itself, which appeared familiar to readers of the *Kitāb sīr al-āsrār*, a book first written in Arabic and then translated into both Persian—which also helped its diffusion in the Indian world, as well—and Ottoman Turkish. The *Prince* was a seed filled with Islamic elements, which fell on a soil that was already fertilised, having produced the *Kitāb sīr al-āsrār*. Therefore, the problem of the well-known similarity between Machiavellian and Islamic political thought must not be resolved through a chronological—and axiological—pre-eminence, or by means of dismissing the possible historical contacts among cultures.⁶⁹ Emphasizing the importance of this “Eurasian Pseudo-Aristotelianism” and its most widespread product, we are able to find another reason why Machiavelli and Islamic political thinkers often appear as being very similar: not only did they face the same problems, but they also looked at them through the same lenses. Against the influential opinion that “juxtaposition of statecraft and piety became typical of the Advice genre and it rendered Machiavelli superfluous in the Islamic world”,⁷⁰ these pages—and this book—tell a completely different story, in which the Islamic political tradition fed Machiavelli, in the same way that the latter would eventually feed the former.

NOTES

1. R. Khawam (ed.) (1976), *Le livre des ruses: La stratégie politique des Arabes* (Paris: Phébus): 450: “Ce livre, écrit cent ans avant Machiavel, est à sa façon (non la moins divertissante) la meilleure réponse aux Occidentaux étonnés qui découvrent aujourd’hui l’extraordinaire habileté politique des responsables du monde musulman”.
2. J. Dakhlia (2002), “Les Miroirs des princes islamiques: Une modernité sourde?”, *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 57, no. 5, 1191–1206: “Ne pas s’attarder sur la pertinence d’une telle assimilation” (p. 1191).
3. A. Black (2008), *The West and Islam: Religion and Political Thought in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press): 5, that quotes but does not consider the *Secret of Secrets*, with which this chapter will deal, since “it seems to have had virtually no influence on western political thought” (p. 102).

4. L.T. Darling (2013), *Mirrors for Princes in Europe and the Middle East: A Case of Historiographical Incommensurability*, in: A. Classen (ed.), *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Transcultural Experiences in the Premodern World* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter): 223–242.
5. S.J. Williams (2003), *The Secret of Secrets: The Scholarly Career of a Pseudo-Aristotelian Text in the Latin Middle Ages* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press), deals only with the academic reception of the work in the Middle Ages, but provides an excellent list of bibliographic references. Therefore, I refer to it also for secondary literature. On the medieval circulation of the *Secret* see also S.J. Williams (2004), “Giving Advice and Taking It: The Reception by Rulers of the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum Secretorum* as a *Speculum principis*”, in: C. Casagrande, C. Crisciani and S. Vecchio (eds), *Consilium: Teorie e pratiche del consigliare nella cultura medievale* (Florence: Edizioni del Galluzzo): 139–180. I will use the following English edition: *Secretum Secretorum*, ed. A.S. Fulton, trans. I. Ali, included in R. Bacon (1909–1940), *Opera hactenus inedita*, ed. R. Steele, 16 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press): Vol. V (henceforth *Secretum*). Since this version is from the Arabic text, whose textual transmission in the Europe was, as we will see, highly heterogenous, translations, when needed, will be of my own doing and the original text will be always quoted.
6. Rumi usually means the language of Rum, Eastern Rome, that is, the Byzantine Empire. The most accepted view is that, in that context, Rumi could have meant Syriac, given that some works of Aristotle first had a Syriac version before being translated into Arabic. See Williams, *The Secret of Secrets*, 18. For the context see also D. Gutas (1998), *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early Abbasid Society* (London and New York: Routledge).
7. Therefore, when I mention “Aristotle”, I am always referring to the character who is writing the letter to Alexander and by no means to the real historical figure (unless otherwise specified).
8. M. Grignaschi (1980), “La diffusion du *Secretum Secretorum* (Sirr-Al-'Asrar) dans l'Europe occidentale”, *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age*, 55, 7–70: 7.
9. L. Thorndike (1923–1958), *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, 8 vols. (New York: Macmillan): Vol. II, 267.
10. C.B. Schmitt (1986), “Pseudo-Aristotle in the Latin Middle Ages”, in: J. Kraye, W.F. Ryan and C.B. Schmitt (eds), *Pseudo-Aristotle in the Middle Ages: The Theology and Other Texts* (London: The Warburg Institute): 4.
11. M. Milani (2001), “La tradizione italiana del *Secretum secretorum*”, *La parola del testo*, 5, 209–253; S.J. Williams (2003), “The Vernacular

- Tradition of the Pseudo-Aristotelian Secret of Secrets in the Middle Ages: Translations, Manuscripts, and Readers”, in: N. Bray and L. Sturlese (eds), *Filosofia in volgare nel medioevo* (Turnhout, Brepols): 451–482; I. Zamuner (2005), “La tradizione romanza del *Secretum secretorum* pseudo-aristotelico: Regesto delle versioni e dei manoscritti”, *Studi Medievali*, 46, 31–116.
12. To mention one printed exemplar, published after 1503: *Philosophorum maximi Aristotelis secretum secretorum alio nomine liber moralium de regimine principum ad Alexandrum* (Venice: Bernardino Vitali).
 13. *Secretum*, 193.
 14. The medical roots of the notion are oddly neglected in M. Senellart (1995), *Les Arts de gouverner: Du regimen médiéval au concept de gouvernement* (Paris: Seuil).
 15. C.B. Schmitt (1982), “Francesco Storella and the Last Printed Edition of the Latin *Secretum secretorum* (1555)”, in: W.F. Ryan and C.B. Schmitt (eds), *Pseudo-Aristotle, The Secret of Secrets: Sources and Influences* (London: The Warburg Institute): 124–131.
 16. W. Eamon (2005), *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).
 17. A.H. Gilbert (1928), “Notes on the Influence of the *Secretum Secretorum*”, *Speculum*, 3, 84–98.
 18. A.H. Gilbert (1938), *Machiavelli's Prince and Its Forerunners: The Prince as a Typical Book de Reginime Principum* (Durham: Duke University Press): 88–89: “Even if, notwithstanding the wide circulation of the *Secretum Secretorum* for centuries, he had not read it, he can hardly have escaped by indirect influence”.
 19. F. Gilbert (1939), “The Humanist Concept of the Prince and *The Prince* of Machiavelli”, *Journal of Modern History*, 11, 449–483.
 20. On the ethnocentric limits of contextualism see Kaya Şahin’s chapter in this volume.
 21. See L. Biasiori (2015), “Tra Machiavelli e Reginald Pole: Migliore Cresci e la *Vita del Principe* (1544)”, *Bollettino della società di studi valdesi*, 217, 5–26.
 22. Ibidem, 9. On the figure of Muhammad in late Italian Humanism, see Pier Mattia Tommasino’s chapter in this book.
 23. G. Marcocci (2008), “Machiavelli, la religione dei romani e l’impero portoghesi”, *Storica*, XIV, nos. 41–42, 35–68.
 24. L. Biasiori (2013), “Comparaison comme estrangement: Machiavel, les anciens, les modernes, les sauvages”, *Essais. Revue interdisciplinaire d’humanités*, hors série no. 1, 151–169.
 25. W.H. Bowen (1938), “L’histoire de la terre neuve du Peru: A Translation by Jacques Gohory and The Earliest Treatise on Tobacco”, *Isis*, 28,

- 330–363. See also E. Balmas (1982), “Jacques Gohory traduttore del Machiavelli (con documenti inediti)”, in his *Saggi e studi sul rinascimento francese* (Padua: Liviana): 23–73 and R. Gorris Camos (2008), “Dans le labyrinthe de Gohory, lecteur et traducteur de Machiavel”, *Laboratoire italien*, 8, 195–229.
26. N. Machiavelli (1544), *Le premier Livre des Discours de l'Estat de Paix et de guerre* (Paris: Denis Janot): fol. A4^v.
 27. *Secretum*, 186.
 28. *Ibidem*, 188.
 29. G. Fowden (2012), “Pseudo-Aristotelian Politics and Theology in Universal Islam”, in: P.F. Bang and D. Kołodziejczyk (eds), *Universal Empire: A Comparative Approach to Imperial Culture and Representation in Eurasian History* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press): 132.
 30. *Secretum*, 180. On the Persian influences on Islamic mirrors for princes see P. Crone (2004), *Medieval Islamic Political Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press): 148–164.
 31. Gohory also translated *De Occulis Naturae Miraculis* (1559), a book of secrets by the Dutch physician Levinus Lemnius. See D.P. Walker (2003), “Paracelsus and Jacques Gohory”, in his *Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press): 96–106.
 32. Balmas, *Jacques Gohory*, 52.
 33. N. Machiavelli (1571), *Le prince (...) dédié au magnifique Laurens fils de Pierre des Medicis traduit d'Italien en François avec la vie de l'auteur mesme par Iaq. Gohory Parisien*, (Paris: Robert le Mangnier): fol. A4^r.
 34. Some manuscript copies of the *Secret*, like the Florentine manuscript in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale (henceforth BNCF), II. I. 363, contain only the section on physiognomy. The *Physiognōmicon*, the other Pseudo-Aristotelian work dealing with physiognomy, had no circulation in the Arabic world.
 35. *Secretum*, p. 192.
 36. N. Machiavelli (1989), *The Chief Works and Others*, ed. and trans. Allan Gilbert, 3 vols. (Durham and London; Duke University Press): Vol. I, 89–90.
 37. *Ibidem*, Vol. I, 90–91 (slightly revised).
 38. BNCF, Magliabechiano, XXX 181, *Segreto de' segreti*, fol. 10^v: “Conviensi al re pensare le cose che hanno a venire, e i casi che possono avvenire prudentemente provedere, acciò che possa più legiermente sostenere le cose avverse. Quando il re vede alcuno bene ovvero utile, facciano fare con discrezione, non troppo tardi né troppo tosto, acciò che non paia pigro né impetuoso”. According to A.J. Parel (1993), “Ptolemy as Source of *The Prince* 25”, *History of Political Thought*, 14, 77–83, “there can be little

doubt that in *The Prince* 25 ‘impetuous’ stands for ‘choleric’” and that, therefore, Machiavelli “restands the general Ptolemaic notion” (p. 81). But since Machiavelli actually uses the word *impetuoso*, the problem is to understand to what philosophical tradition he was referring, in this case not Ptolemy but Aristotle.

39. BNCF, Magliabechiano XXX 181, fols. 55^r-55^v: “La schiatta di quegli d’India (...) sono huomini traditori e ingannatori e non è in loro questo obrobio. Quegli di Persia, o vero i Turchi, (...) sono uomini troppo animosi e di grande presuntione. Combatti adunque con l’una gente e con l’altra di queste come si confa al tuo lavorio (...) e fia l’opere tue manifeste e occulte secondo il modo premesso e secondo la qualità overo dispostione della scienza delle stelle”.
40. For other aspects of Machiavelli as a reader of Aristotle, see C. Ginzburg (2015), “Intricate Readings: Machiavelli, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas”, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 78, 157–172.
41. *Secretum*, 178.
42. N. Machiavelli (1996), *Machiavelli and His Friends: Their Personal Correspondence*, ed. and trans. J.B. Atkinson and D. Sices (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press): 242 (slightly revised).
43. The definition comes from P. Burke (2000), *A Social History of Knowledge: From Gutenberg to Diderot* (Cambridge and Malden, Mass.: Polity and Blackwell): 28.
44. *Secretum*, 176.
45. L. Vissing (1986), *Machiavel ou la politique de l’apparence* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France).
46. Gilbert, *The Prince and its forerunners*, 63.
47. Machiavelli, *The Chief Works*, Vol. I, 48.
48. *Secretum*, 247.
49. Black, *The West and Islam*, 107.
50. Matthew 10:16.
51. For the relationship of Machiavelli with the Gaddi family, see L. Biasiori (2017), *Nello scrittoio di Machiavelli: Il Principe e la Ciropedia di Senofonte* (Rome: Carocci).
52. Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Gaddiano 92, fol 31^r: “Et quando il popolo ae facte queste cose, lo re si fa venire dinanci huomini scelerati et degni di morire e qui vi li fae crudelmente uccidere acciò che ‘l popolo ne pigli exemplo e possia fae gratia al popolo alleviando i trebuti e rimettendo loro parte de debiti, per la quale cosa la gente tutta corre per essere tutta socto cotale re e’l suo reame moltiplica”.
53. Machiavelli, *The Chief Works*, Vol. I, 31.
54. Machiavelli, *Machiavelli and his friends*, 55: “We have tried to locate some *Lives* of Plutarch, and there are none for sale in Florence. Be

- patient, because we have to write to Venice; to tell you the truth, you can go to hell for asking for so many things”.
55. S. Landi (2014), “*Per purgare li animi di quelli populi*: Metafore del vincolo politico e religioso in Machiavelli”, *Storia del pensiero politico*, 2, 187–212: 205.
 56. Machiavelli, *The Chief Works*, Vol. I, 496.
 57. *Secretum*, 235.
 58. Machiavelli, *The Chief Works*, Vol. I, 87.
 59. BNCF, Magliabechiano, XXX 181, fol. 45r: “Mai tu ordini uno tuo baiulo nel reggimento nel luogo di te, imperò che il suo consiglio può guastare e corrompere il regime tuo”.
 60. Machiavelli, *The Chief Works*, Vol. I, 87.
 61. *Secretum*, 236; Machiavelli, *The Chief Works*, Vol. I, 85.
 62. *Secretum*, 236.
 63. Machiavelli, *The Chief Works*, Vol. I, 85–86: “When you see that a minister is thinking more about himself than about you, and that in the course of all his actions he is seeking his own profit, such a man as this never is a good minister; never can you rely on him; because he who has your existence in his hands should never think of himself but of his prince”.
 64. Ibidem, 63.
 65. Ibidem, 86.
 66. *Secretum*, 180.
 67. Machiavelli, *The Chief Works*, Vol. I, 61.
 68. G.W. Most (2016), “The Rise and Fall of *Quellenforschung*”, in: A. Blair and A.-S. Goeing (eds), *For the Sake of Learning: Essays in Honor of Anthony Grafton*, 2 vols. (Leiden and Boston: Brill): Vol. II, 933–954.
 69. As done by R.H. Dekmejian and A.F. Thabit (2000), “Machiavelli’s Arab Precursor: Ibn Zafar al-Šiqillī”, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 27, no. 2: 125–137, and C. Colmo (1998), “Alfarabi on the Prudence of Founders”, *The Review of Politics*, 60, no. 4: 719–741, respectively.
 70. Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought*, 52.

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Turkophilia and Religion: Machiavelli, Giovio and the Sixteenth-Century Debate About War

Vincenzo Lavenia

This chapter examines the genesis of Turkophilia in the sixteenth century, linking it to the reception of Niccolò Machiavelli and of the humanist Paolo Giovio, in particular the latter's *Commentario de le cose de' turchi* which was published in 1532 by the same Roman printer as Machiavelli, Antonio Blado. Through the analysis of a number of texts, mainly Italian and Spanish, published before and after the middle of the sixteenth century, which in some cases fed into the collection of the scholar Francesco Sansovino, the chapter will show how Machiavelli's and Giovio's approach influenced a realistic view towards, and the possibility of a comparative analysis of, the Ottoman Empire. Specifically, it focuses on the issue of military discipline and the relationship between religion and war, which had taken centre stage thanks to Machiavelli's dissection of the Roman Empire.

Machiavelli soon became an author vilified by both the Catholics and the Protestants, but his dispassionate analysis of armies, civil religion and political freedom had made its mark. His charge that Christianity was a

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faith incapable of mobilising for war and celebrating worldly glory provoked a polemical debate; but Giovio was no less a realist, who, even while avoiding a similar ostracism, was himself a controversial writer, above all in the view of Spanish authors. Giovio, although wary of their military strength, did not see the Ottomans as barbarians and simply “the enemy”, but tried to understand what was the basis of their military potency, pinpointing religion as the backbone of the armies of the Sublime Porte. Many who wrote after him on the Ottomans not only took their cue from his pages, but appropriated a Machiavellian language without actually citing the author of the *Discourses on Livy* and freely intermixed his political insights with Giovio’s.

After the 1560s the writings on Islam and the Ottomans published by Francesco Sansovino prompted a sort of fashion for Turkish materials (*turcica*), but authors, particularly in Catholic areas, quickly became more cautious in suggesting that Ottoman military discipline was superior to that of Christian armies thanks to their religion. It was one thing to plagiarise Machiavelli’s *Discourses* or Giovio’s *Commentari*, but another to openly quote from them. Furthermore, by the end of the sixteenth century Turkophilia had begun to ebb, its place being taken by a more aggressive military discourse announcing the decline of the Turks and lauding the presumed superiority of Christian forces, founded on religion and an improved discipline. As René de Lucinge, a friend of Giovanni Botero, wrote, the Ottomans could be beaten by improving western armies’ religious preparedness, distributing printed books and fomenting uprisings among the Christian subjects of the Sublime Porte and discord among the Muslims.¹ His thesis was lucid and relatively realistic, but, like those who had written before him, Lucinge could hardly have composed his treatise without digesting the teachings of Giovio and Machiavelli, which, as we shall see, had a profound impact on political analysis and the sixteenth century’s fascination with Islam.

FAITH, ARMS AND DISCIPLINE

The Oratorian Father Tommaso Bozio was a soldier of the Counter-Reformation. A prolific writer, his chosen battleground was historical controversy where he aimed to demonstrate which was the true church and the earthly signs that proved it so. The heft of the Iberian empires was, in his eyes, the clear proof that Catholicism guaranteed, above all other denominations, the stability of regimes, favouring their armed

superiority in Europe and the world. Who could think otherwise before the visible triumphs of the Spaniards and the Portuguese in Asia and America?²

Bozio's target was anything but generic. From the 1530s on, in regard to the relationship between Christianity and the force of arms, an opposite reading to the Bozio's had enjoyed currency, which was corrosive, disturbing and potentially explosive. As Machiavelli had argued, since war was a fact of life, Christianity's fault consisted in enfeebling the spirit by substituting humility for glory as an immanent religious goal. Christianity was not a civil creed capable of mobilising citizens and subject peoples as had, among the Romans, the rites and oracles established by Numa Pompilius (or by Moses among the Jews). And this was a major factor in the decline of the Italian peninsula, weakened by the ubiquity of popes and friars incapable of understanding the new significance of war for the dominance of Europe. "Ancient religion—Machiavelli maintains in Chapter 2 of Book II of the *Discourses*—attributed blessedness only to men abounding in worldly glory, such as generals of armies and princes of states. Our religion has glorified humble and contemplative men rather than active ones".³

It was a theory, at once new and venerable, that revived imputations made again topical by the resurgence, in the second half of the fifteenth century, of speculation over the decline of Rome, led by the humanist Biondo Flavio. That theory however contained an unacceptable kernel: the finger pointed at the unresolved tension between the exercise of arms and the religion of Christ, between the stoic virtues of glory and fortitude and those extolled in the Beatitudes.⁴ Intending to confute such imputations, Bozio drafted in 1593 his *De robore bellico*, in which he lauds Catholic might as a proof of the falsity of Machiavelli's arguments. There are some, he writes, who have had the temerity to claim that not only the Roman, but even the Turks surpassed Christians in warfare because of their religion, and that they were more valorous than the soldiers of Christ. Nothing could be further from the truth: the Ottoman Empire had wrought destruction on an area of the world hostile to the papacy (the Byzantine schismatics') and had been elsewhere successful only where the Habsburgs were weakened by Lutheran heresy, thus proving to be a divine scourge punishing a divided Europe. The soldiers of the sultan had never faced a great Christian army, Bozio continues; and furthermore, the recent victory at Lepanto (1571) showed that when that occurred, the Catholic armies would prevail over those of the

Sublime Porte. The Ottoman Empire could not then emulate ancient Rome, still less the preceding Arab empires or the Iberian ones, now stretching over the known world.⁵

What induced Bozio to bring the “Turks” into a work taking issue with Machiavelli? Who had thought to compare them to the ancient Romans, holding them up as an example to be imitated? Machiavelli had touched on the ferocity, the political acumen and the discipline of the Ottomans in a few brief passages of his work, but a comprehensive survey of Turkish military organisation is nowhere to be found in his pages.⁶ Nonetheless Bozio was right to feel that a certain strand of writing on the Turks had become enmeshed with the reaction to Machiavelli’s ideas in so far as the latter’s emphasis on the connection between religion and a disciplined success on the battlefield found many echoes in the pages of a well-known contemporary of the author of the *Discourses*. And that was Paolo Giovio, who had feared and at the same time admired the Porte, inspiring, from the end of the sixteenth century onward, a revitalisation of writing on the Turks during the extended Habsburg-Ottoman wars.⁷

So much was understood by a friend of Bozio’s, the Jesuit Antonio Possevino. After having dusted off the old model of the Christian Soldier in a bestselling catechism (1569) that was even distributed to the troops embarking for Lepanto, in the process inventing a genre, and after having also published under his own name a (not very sophisticated) attack on Machiavelli (1592), Possevino offered the world a *Bibliotheca selecta* (1593) listing, in a sort of reverse image of the *Index of Prohibited Books*, all the books that a pious Catholic ought to read (or could read with appropriate safeguards).⁸ A paragraph of this monumental work is dedicated to writings on the Ottomans. It mentions texts by Andrea Cambini, Giovanni Antonio Menavino and Hans Böhm, but when Govio’s name appears it is only beside his *Historiae Sui Temporis* (1550–1552) and the *Elogia virorum bellica virtute illustrium* (1551), “where he deals with the vices (*vizi*) of the Turkish emperors”. Possevino goes on to take issue with those heretical authors who have attributed the superior potency of the Turks to a “shortage of God’s Word (*defectus Verbi Dei*)” among Christians. “It is ungodly (*impium*) to read of the achievements and rituals of the Turks”, he asserts, and uses the same arguments deployed by Bozio to counter admiration for Ottoman successes (and too-detailed description of their religion).⁹

Possevino’s list however passes over in silence the title of the most widely read work on the Ottomans of the entire sixteenth century: the

Commentario de le cose de' turchi by none other than Giovio, which was not placed on the *Index*, went through dozens of editions and was speedily translated throughout Europe.¹⁰ We can read in Possevino's silence an acute awareness of how the discussion of Ottoman discipline had evolved in the sixteenth century, since the printing of the *Discourses* and the *Commentario*.

The first thing to note is that Machiavelli and Giovio shared publishers: one outside Italy (the exiled Pietro Perna, who published Machiavelli and also Giovio's *Elogia*)¹¹ and another in. Like the *Commentario*, which appeared in 1532 but was drafted in the two preceding years, the *Discourses*, *The Prince* and the *Florentine Histories* were first published between 1531 and 1532 by Antonio Blado, a printer active in Rome. Blado's catalogue—he had previously published all kinds of works—displays a discernible choice of field only in the second half of the 1530s, when he acquired the title of *stampatore camerale*, and dedicated himself to a full schedule of editions of the classics.¹² Furthermore, in the same period many texts also came from his workshop on the war against the Turks and many works emanating from a politico-religious faction operating partly from within the Curia, which might be defined imperial and cautiously in favour of the convocation of an ecumenical council.¹³

Giovio presented his *Commentario* to Pope Clement VII on the occasion of accompanying him to Bologna to meet the Emperor Charles V. On that excursion the Spanish humanist Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda was also of the party, and was also well aware of Giovio's thoughts on the Turks: that they enjoyed a particular advantage in warfare thanks to the strength of their faith, not unlike that of Machiavelli's Romans, and superior to the Christians'. These dispassionate assessments of the Ottoman soldiers' discipline were not however a novelty: the humanist Coluccio Salutati (d. 1406) had addressed this aspect of Turkish power in a series of letters that were still being read in Florence in the early sixteenth century.¹⁴ Furthermore, political detachment was an approach to the Ottoman world that went back to the fifteenth century.¹⁵ Turkophilia was always a litmus paper for European discontent, and with papal Rome especially, so we need not be surprised by its ubiquity in the Protestant world. None the less, even in pre-Tridentine Italy, the spell cast by the Turks played a role. As Francesco Vettori wrote to Machiavelli on 27 June 1513: "let the Turk come with all of Asia" to humble corrupt and fratricidal Christendom.¹⁶ A frequent omen, in many cases interwoven with millenarian expectations and religious pessimism.

The Florentine historian and humanist Francesco Guicciardini was among the first to accuse Giovio of over-enthusiasm for the Turks, in Bologna in fact, where they met in 1532.¹⁷ But the key question remains: did Giovio and Machiavelli know one another? In his *Dialogus de viris litteris illustribus*, published in the eighteenth century by Girolamo Tiraboschi, but written in the aftermath of the Sack of Rome (1527), Giovio extols Machiavelli as playwright.¹⁸ A better known portrait is that of the *Elogia*, where Machiavelli is defined as “a mocker and an atheist (*derisor e ateo*)” and *The Prince*, the *Art of War* and the *Discourses* are cited in that order.¹⁹ After all, as Giovio, a frequenter of the Orti Oricellari circle and a Florence resident from 1520 to 1522, himself admitted, having Cardinal Giulio de’ Medici as his patron he was a stranger to little of the cultural life of Machiavelli’s city: “there is nowhere I know better or am more familiar with”.²⁰ However that may be, the *Commentario* is something of an exception in Giovio’s oeuvre (not least because written in the vernacular) and displays a degree of family feeling with Machiavelli’s pages on religion and war.

As he writes in the dedication to Charles V, Giovio had been moved to draft this text by the urgent need to provide “Christian soldiers (*soldati cristiani*)” with “examples from the past (*esempi delle cose passate*)” so that they could ultimately achieve “a superior and more appropriate discipline (*a migliore e più accomodata disciplina*)” with which to repel and then defeat the Turks.²¹ And the word “discipline” is the leitmotif that helps us understand its success. “Military discipline—we read—is regulated with such justice and severity by the Turks that we may say that theirs surpasses that of the Greeks and the Romans”. Quarrels and duels are unheard of in the Ottoman ranks, as are episodes of insubordination; and furthermore their health and dietary regimes are among the best. Giovio emphasises the absence of alcohol, but also their controlled consumption of bread and their cleanliness, which gave the Turkish armies a rather different appearance to those of the Christians, with their wagonloads of foodstuffs and prostitutes. What is more the Turks went to war accepting the risk of dying, furnished by their religion “with a mad conviction that every man has the time and manner of his death inscribed on his countenance”.²² In short, Islam exercised for the Ottomans the same function that, according to Machiavelli, the love of glory and their oracles had for the Romans. Alongside its objective analysis of the Ottoman world without religious preconceptions, and its series of medallions depicting the Turkish sultans (of whom his museum

at Como boasted eleven portraits), Giovio's work also lauds the Janissary system and suggests that, in some circumstances, the Ottoman soldiers conducted themselves "like so many Observant friars".²³

But particularly indigestible after the Tridentine revolution would have been the passages dedicated to the sultans: the praise awarded to Mehmed II, who believed in nothing, broke his pledged word and studied the ancients²⁴; the "feigned piety (*simulata pietà*)" of Selim I (r. 1512–1520) "who was in no way a barbarian (*che non aveva nulla del barbaro*)" despite being a "cruel master (*Signore crudele*)", a parricide and a destroyer, ever averse to "dawdling (*indugiare*)" for fear of missing an opportunity²⁵; or the "religious and liberal (*religioso e liberale*)" Süleyman, who had spared the lives of the defeated Christian Knights of Rhodes, abjuring useless atrocities "with great piety and humanity (*con somma religione e umanità*)"; a gesture which, as we read, "our own soldiers might not have made (*forse non arebbero fatto e nostri soldati*)". Furthermore, Süleyman laid claim with good reason to the legacy of Rome and its empire: "I have often heard it said by trustworthy men (...) that the mantle of the Roman Empire is his by right, and over the whole of the West, as the legitimate successor of Constantine".²⁶ Giovio writes in genuine awe of the power of the Turks, but no less with a barely concealed admiration which leads him to express daring judgements. Should an open confrontation occur, he maintains, the Christian infantry and cavalry might well be able to prevail over their adversary thus concluding "the contest for control of the whole world". But none the less, it would be necessary to "prepare timidly and fearfully, and not listen to the vain and dangerous words of those who underestimate the Turks and boast without ever having faced them".²⁷ It is clear here what a gulf separates Giovio from Spanish and crusader stereotyping: they were not dealing with effeminate sodomites, or with easily defeated barbarians, but with disciplined soldiers and able statesmen whose organisation and prowess in the field was to be feared and respected.

IMPERIALIST RESPONSES

It was the Iberian worldview transplanted to Italy that first reacted to this image of the Turk and to Giovio's alleged falsehoods. The religious scholar and polemicist Girolamo Muzio, inciter of inquisitorial incursions, placed him next to Machiavelli in a list of enemies of the Roman Curia (1550).²⁸ But it is once again the publisher Blado to whom we

should look, having a few years earlier printed a notable work by Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, best known as the apologist of Spanish imperialism in the Americas, whose humanist education had been acquired in his years at the College of Spain in Bologna, later to be itself the target of the Inquisition. While there, he aligned himself with the teachings of Pietro Pomponazzi, corresponded and later crossed swords with Erasmus, wrote commentaries on Cicero and Aristotle, became part of Giulio de' Medici's circle and published a first dialogue *Gonsalus seu de appetenda gloria* (1523).²⁹ A champion of the natural consonance of Christian ethics and classical Stoic philosophy, in that work he nominates the Spaniards as the authentic heirs of the Romans, and after the Sack of Rome and the subsequent reconciliation of the empire and the papacy, turned his attention eastward, dedicating to Charles V his *Cohortatio ut bellum suscipiat in Turcas* (1529), in which he attacks Erasmus's accommodating pacifism. This was no mere occasional tract written in celebration of the Emperor's coronation. The Turkish assault, Sepúlveda writes, threatened Christian "life and liberty"; the Turks (Asiatics and barbarians) had no philosophers, no theologians, no orators: they had no *polis*. The Turks, in the last resort, offered the same choice that confronted the Greeks with the Persian invasions: to stand and fight for civilisation or succumb to the most despotic of tyrannies. The Turks were sodomites and cowards, and if they relied on the Janissaries it was because these were converted Greek Christians. They had no respect for property, the cornerstone of all liberty. Europe had opposed Asia since the Greeks had waged war with the Trojans (Sepúlveda rehearsed the imaginary Trojan-Turk line of descent, which enjoyed a long currency).³⁰ And the legitimate and sole heirs of Greek culture were the Christians. It was the task of Charles V, more as King of Spain than as emperor, to emulate Alexander the Great and create an alternative world empire to that of the unmartial, beatable Turks.³¹

It was from this kind of effusion that Giovio was distancing himself; but Sepúlveda was not going to follow his lead. Returning to Rome in 1533, and before going back to Spain to become a court chronicler, he put his pen to a dialogue entitled *Democrats*—published by Blado two years later—in which revisited the issue of the congruence of classical glory with Christian virtue, taking issue with Erasmus on the one hand, and on the other—precociously—with those who maintained that faith in Christ rendered men "indolent (*ignavi*)" and soldiers inferior. This had been Machiavelli's thesis, and that this passage refers to

him specifically is confirmed by a manuscript of Sepúlveda's work in the Vatican Library where Machiavelli is mentioned by name.³² In the opening pages of the dialogue Sepúlveda exults over the news of the Turks having fled in terror at the threatened approach of Charles V's army, mobilised in 1532. This incipit recycles the stereotype of Turkish cowardice, setting against a supposed Ottoman discipline the representative figure of the Stoic, but also Christian, soldier.³³

A few years later it was the turn of a Portuguese humanist, educated in Bologna like Sepúlveda, with whom he had contact, to rekindle the debate on military discipline. This is Jerónimo Osório, who in his *De nobilitate civili libri duo*, *De nobilitate Christiana libri tres*, published in Lisbon in 1542, attacks the "wicked (*nefarious*)" Machiavelli, opposing his thesis belittling Christian military valour with the example of ardent battles of the Iberian *Reconquista* and the victories of the Portuguese Empire in Ottoman, or, more broadly, Islamic Asia.³⁴ As far as Spain is concerned, a Castilian translation of Giovio's book appeared in 1543 and was followed by an intermittent cult of Turkophilia, which can be discerned more in the literary tradition than in political or military treatises.³⁵ To outline the reactions provoked by Giovio's essay, I will limit myself here to three examples.

The first concerns Vasco Díaz Tanco de Fregenal and his *Palinodia de la nefanda y fiera nación de los turcos y de su engañoso arte y cruel modo de guerrear* (1547), dedicated to Prince Philip (the future King Philip II). As the author recounts in the book, "I came across in Bologna a book in the Tuscan tongue called *Commentario de las guerras de los Turcos* (...). The which book (...) seemed to me a work of the highest regard". But this praiseworthy work, as Tanco testifies, was criticised by experts in the Turkish matter for its "imperfections and rash judgements (*imperfecciones y ymoderaciones*)"; to the extent that that the author had decided to contribute to the debate, focusing on the key issue of the time: that of military discipline. Albeit in a book infused with anti-Turkish hatred, the allure of Giovio's pages continually gets the better of the writer's pious aims, as can be seen in the near word-for-word translations of passages from the *Commentario* we keep coming across in the text: from the portrait of Selīm I—who, on a par with Caesar, liked to read histories, and had them translated for him into Turkish—to that of Süleymān "so generous towards his soldiery that with this admirable quality he won their hearts". The Turks are further compared to the "Macedonian phalanxes with which Alexander the Great conquered the East (...), although of

course—Tanco hurries to cover himself—with this great difference: that the ancient kings of Macedonia were noble and virtuous by birth, while the Turks are cowardly and cruel".³⁶

Such a generous (if cautious) approach soon ceased. In 1556 there appeared in Valencia an *Hystoria en la qual se trata de la origen y guerras que han tenido los turcos (...)* *y de las costumbres y vidas dellos* by one Vicente Roca, who had also been in Italy. With the approval of the Inquisition, this work aimed to alert "simple souls, who are given to trembling if they hear anything of the Turks". Such a reaction, according to Roca, was the fault of those who, instead of illustrating their tyranny, extolled their military discipline, without making clear "that those infidels are not so courageous as they are painted". The butt of this brief polemical passage is revealed a few pages later, and it is Giovio, who "was not so devout as to live himself in his own diocese, but was always running after popes and cardinals in Rome". This acid vignette is followed by a heavy indictment of France, guilty of an alliance with the Ottomans. The Turks, the author reminds us, are first and foremost infidels, who, were it not for the Janissaries, would have long ago yielded to Spain; even if, Roca is forced to admit, while "depraved and barbarous in many respects, in others are good-mannered and well-trained". In fact, they were most strict in their punishments, neither gambled nor drank, did not blaspheme and would not allow the Christians under their yoke to do so.³⁷

Some years later, far from his homeland, the conquistador of Colombia, Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada drafted his *Antojovio*, a confutation of Giovio's *Historiae*, which would remain in manuscript until 1927. A veteran of the Italian wars (1522–1530), he sets down his own view of recent times and accuses Giovio of being hostile towards Spain and of writing pages comparable less to Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita* than to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Quesada goes on to claim that the Italian was given to "eulogising the Turk" in many passages of his work, a recurrent accusation against Giovio.³⁸ Whatever his intentions, he came over as a friend of the Ottomans, and in some senses, a true comrade to the ungodly Machiavelli.

IN GIOVIO'S WAKE

In the sixteenth century political and military realism was not the only prism through which the Ottoman world was examined; and dealing with religion in relation to the Turks did not automatically entail concerning oneself with military discipline in Giovio's wake. A Florentine

contemporary of Machiavelli, ex-infantry-officer and ex-Savonarolian, Andrea Cambini, in his *Libro della origine de turchi et imperio degli ottomani*, published posthumously in 1529, dedicates a few asides to the Jews that fled the Iberian peninsula to the relative freedom of worship allowed by the Ottomans, who permitted the subjects of their empire to observe “the ceremonies and practices of the faith into which they were born”; and to the achievement of the Franciscan John of Capestrano, who, a “defenceless mendicant (*poverello disarmato*)” (like Machiavelli’s Savonarola), managed with the promise of paradise to mobilise a crusader army composed not of “powerful or rich men but plebeians and the poor, who, armed with the zeal of faith, had been ready to face the perils of death (...), while only with the greatest difficulty can preachers convince princes and the powerful of this world to do as much”.³⁹

Different again was the cosmopolitan approach of Guillaume Postel.⁴⁰ In his *République des Turcs* (1560) he examines Ottoman discipline and doubts whether the Christians would then be up to defeating them. He also draws a picture of a calculating Muḥammad, as an imposter who founded a religion, pretending for the good of his people to speak with God.⁴¹

Meanwhile, Giovio’s thinking was mixed in with a reading of Machiavelli (and Pomponazzi) in Benedetto Ramberti’s *Libri tre delle cose de turchi*, published five years after the author’s journey through Ottoman territories, made in 1534. In the eyes of Muḥammad, “that most astute of men”, “who affected holy and moderate behaviour”, war was the remedy for the idleness of a people naturally inclined to that vice; and the Turks, following the Arabs, had interjected thanks to Islam the virtues of blind obedience, rejection of blasphemy and contempt for death. But it was above all in his political and military practice that the Ottoman sultan revealed, in Ramberti’s view, his ability to conduct himself as a “New Prince”:

When My Lord Turk acquires a province, he immediately reduces to rubble all or most of those fortresses that do not seem essential to preserve, and destroys the cities, reducing them to sad little scatterings of houses. As well as which he snuffs out and extinguishes all the nobles and great men to be found therein.

The Machiavellian echo is obvious.⁴² But there is another more nuanced passage: “(the sultan) allows that everyone live with his ancient beliefs, because forcing them to embrace a new religion, apart from

driving them to desperation, would forfeit the hope of acquiring their loyalty". None of which is to suggest that the Turks do not have their limitations in warfare: the inadequacy of their infantry, the absence of a naval policy and their dependence on ex-Christian militias are for Ramberti the weak points of that empire, as elsewhere mercenary armies proved to be; in this context the author sounds a warning note that suggests the possible future ruin of the Porte: "the subject peoples, who unarmed can do nothing and are forced to submit (...), had they weapons, and could believe themselves strong enough, might well aspire to freedom".⁴³

Giovio's and Machiavelli's dispassionate realism in relation to the Ottomans came ever more to the fore after the printing, in 1573, of *Paragone della possanza del gran turco, et di quella del catholico re Filippo* first published in a miscellany by the polymath Antonino Danti. The text, as we read, takes its inspiration from *Comentarii ne quali si descrive la guerra ultima di Francia, la celebrazione del Concilio Tridentino, il soccorso d'Orano, l'impresa del Pignone e l'istoria dell'assedio di Malta* (1567) by the Corsican diplomat and writer Antonio Francesco Cirni. Thus, after Lepanto, there appeared immediate reflections on the vulnerability of the Turks, together with a detailed calculation of their revenues (and those of the Habsburgs) and the weak points of their power at arms, such as their lack of fortresses. The Ottomans, we read, have "neither commanders nor many experienced sailors" and their "innate cowardice and weakness" was revealed at Malta in 1565. Furthermore, the Achilles heel of the empire needs considering, a fifth column ready to rise up against its immoral tyranny: in the event of a Christian victory "every Turk at home or in battle would have a Christian servant would willingly kill him, or abandon him on the field, even if he had earlier renounced his faith". There follows a second text *Del modo d'assaltar l'impero turchesco* inspired by Guicciardini, as well as a miscellany of religious and moral precepts, into which merge, skilfully plagiarised, extended quotes from Giovanni Boccaccio and Machiavelli, filtered through such proto-libertine and jaundiced works as the Tuscan geographer and humanist Tommaso Porcacchi's *Paralleli (...) cavati dagl'istorici* (1567).⁴⁴

Nonetheless, from the papacy of Paul IV (1555–1559) onwards, with the church's condemnation of Machiavelli, the climate was changing and Giovio too was regarded with increasing suspicion, to the extent that, following the pontiff's demise, Girolamo Ruscelli was moved to add to his *Sopplimento nell'Istorie di monsignor Paolo Giovio* (1572) an edition of a *Consiglio di monsignor Giovio raccolto dalle consulte di papa Leone*

Decimo per far l'impresa contra infedeli (1560), which is in effect a repudiation of the defamatory accusation of Giovio's having been bribed by the Turks to write up their empire. The *Consiglio*, repropose various decades after its first drafting, recommends that Christians formulate, on the Ottoman model, ordinances against gambling and blasphemy and severe measures for the religious and military discipline of Christian soldiers. Among the Turks, we read, "gambling is unheard of, armies never take the field if not for battle, blasphemy is never encountered, let alone thefts and rapes, which are unknown in living memory".⁴⁵ The model of the Christian soldier would soon greet the world, in the time of Pope Pius V (1566–1572), but without reference to the vigorous works of Giovio, who had spoken ill of the warlike propensities of Christians and had written in an atmosphere alien to that breathed by the Catholic world of the Counter-Reformation.

ADMIRING THE TURKS, BEATING THE TURKS

The fashion for Turkophilia was prolonged, indeed relaunched by the non-partisan publishing initiatives of the man of letters and polymath Francesco Sansovino with his Venetian anthology *Dell'Historia universale dell'origine et imperio de' turchi*, first issued in 1560, with subsequent internal rearrangements and successive additions and deletions.⁴⁶ The volume enjoyed considerable success and repeated for the Turkish world the more global reach of Giovan Battista Ramusio's celebrated collection of travel literature, published from 1550 onwards. Introducing his anthology, Sansovino gives prominence to the Giovian and Machiavellian nexus of "army discipline", employing it as an interpretive key to the Ottoman world which, with a dose of exoticism added, emphasises its more strictly political and civil aspects in relation to religion, as against what Sansovino dubbs the "notuptomuchness" (*dappocaggine*) of the Christians. The Turks, he points out, are the worthiest heirs of the Romans, they are "disciplinable people" and "in matters of arms they are so superior that the world marvels at them to its cost (...). The real and principal backbone of their sultan consists in his expectation of obedience, because as his subjects adore their prince and believe him little less than a God, they think it a special favour to die, if not at his hands, then at least by his will".⁴⁷ Again, in 1571, Sansovino uses similar terms in his opening to *Annali ovvero le vite de' principi et signori della casa othomana*, which eulogise Süleymān as an exemplary religious and

peace-loving prince “who always kept his word and was a great respecter of religion”.⁴⁸ And he sticks to his viewpoint in successive editions of *Dell'Historia universale* even when, as the title-page alerts, they have been emended by order of the Inquisition.⁴⁹

When? It is the 1580 Parma *Index* (as indeed those of 1590 and 1593) that registers the inclusion of *Dell'Historia universale* among the prohibited books *donec expurgantur*; but its examination had taken place earlier and been recorded in the Roman Congregation of the Index's papers.⁵⁰ The censors were irked in particular by the Life of Muhammad prefacing the collection, and in fact from then on it would disappear and reappear (only mildly retouched) in various subsequent editions. This censorship occurred at the same time that Fabio Benvoglienti's *Per qual cagione per la religione, non si sia fatta guerra fra gentili, et per che si faccia tra christiani* (1570) also ended on the *Index*.⁵¹ This was the only printed text to be circulated following a debate held in Rome in 1567 in response to a troubling question put by Erasmus in his *Dulce bellum inexpertis*: why was war between Christians more vicious and inhuman than wars between the ancients? Together with Benvoglienti himself, Fabio Albergati, Rinaldo Corso, and Gianfrancesco Lottini had gathered in the house of Cardinal Marcantonio Da Mula to discuss the issue; and on the basis of what we know, it seems that those present advanced cautiously Machiavellian answers to this unimpeachably Christian question.⁵² Erasmus's writings, like those of Machiavelli, were banned, and so the minutes of the debate were also proscribed and forbidden from circulating.

Also present at the 1567 debate was the Ligurian historian Uberto Foglietta. His contribution, in which Machiavelli is specifically cited, extols the civil benefits of religions even where they are utter hocus-pocus, attacks Spanish forced baptisms, accuses monotheisms of fomenting massacres and commends the Turks for their almost Roman respect for religious differences, only to then turn the opinion upside down and, citing the Portuguese Osório, to justify wars promoted by Christians against their eternal enemies.⁵³ In those years Foglietta also drafted a *De causis magnitudinis Imperii Turcici & virtutis ac felicitatis Turcarum in bellis perpetuae* which eventually came out in Germany (but not in Italy) in 1592. Dedicated to Prince Marcantonio Colonna, one of the Christian condottieri at Lepanto, after Venice had deserted the anti-Turkish alliance, signing a separate peace with Istanbul, the treatise interweaves passages from Giovio and Machiavelli in the attempt to explain how their military discipline and the worldly function of religion

had enabled the Turks to get back on their feet after Lepanto without suffering mass desertions and apostasies similar to those suffered by Christendom (an observation underlining the strong allure of Islam). For Foglietta, whose reading of the Chapter 2 of Book II of the *Discourses* is quite literal, the culprits for Christian weakness are an excess of priests, cultural exhaustion, a justice system that encouraged litigation and a hedonism that sapped the spirit to the detriment of martial discipline.⁵⁴

Twenty years on, the historian and jurist Lazzaro Soranzo in his *L'ottomanno*, first published in 1598, took a completely different line. Basing himself on a close reading of the Venetian sources, Soranzo analyses the state of the Habsburg Empire during the *Langer Türkenkrieg*. He concludes that the enemy's discipline was slipping under the pressure of "comfort (*commodità*)" and "pleasure-seeking (*delizie*)", turning the Turkophile lexicon around to extoll the superiority of the Christians. The only valiant soldiers available to the Ottomans were converts because the Asiatics were "soft and effeminate (*molli et effeminati*)"—an expression of Machiavelli's—and confirmed the prejudices the ancient Greeks had entertained about them. Furthermore, the Turkish population had now to retire to the mountains to be safe from "thefts and murderers (*assassinamenti e ladrarie*)"; and if the Ottoman soldier had once been a paragon of virtue, it was now—Soranzo writes, citing Bozio—the Christians, redeemed by the new catechisms, that deserved first place.⁵⁵ The Turks, he goes on, "in combat rely more on numbers, on their belief in destiny, on the panic sown by their war-engines and the hideous shouting of their barbarous voices, than in orderliness and true discipline". The Europeans therefore should cease instructing the Turks in the use of firearms and put an end to an illicit trade condemned by more than one papal bull, remembering that the Turks, masters of deception "as commanded by their lawgiver Muhammad", would use that gunpowder against the Europeans.⁵⁶ Soranzo thus distances himself from Giovio, calls for a recognition of the supposed new disciplined strength of Christian arms and outlines a strategy for fomenting revolt inside the Ottoman Empire, employing spies and circulating printed texts abhorred by the Turks: outright war should be followed by rebellion and the conversion (or rather, reconversion) of the forces subject to the Turkish yoke, which was now in his view, as previously in Lucinge's, from whom he had taken a large part of his argument, weakened and dissoluble.⁵⁷

The same ideas were also entertained by an Italian living in religious exile in Germany, a translator into Latin and annotator of

Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* (1582) and brother of the well-known jurist Alberico Gentili, author of *De iure belli* (1598). In 1600, in Altdorf, Scipione Gentili delivered an oration *De re militari romana et turcica*, in which, following the teachings of Machiavelli, Giovio, his own master, the Neo-Stoic Justus Lipsius, and his brother Alberico—the last two both authors of essays on the military virtues of the Romans⁵⁸—compared, in a complex style worthy of Machiavelli, the relative strong points of the Roman and the Ottoman empires. He emphasised their religion, their discipline, the frequency with which the Ottomans breached agreements and the extent to which Muhammad resembled Numa, with literal borrowings from Machiavelli.⁵⁹ Again in the following year Gentili had a hand in the publication of a collection entitled *Turca NIKETOS*, bringing together a brief *Dissertatio de statu imperii Turcici*, a Latin translation of Soranzo's *L'Ottomanno* and another of *Il Turco vincibile in Ungheria* (1597), an advisory paper from the pen of the military engineer Achille Tarducci da Corinaldo. On the subject of religion and martial toughness Tarducci almost explicitly cites Machiavelli and recalls the example of Cyrus, who in Xenophon's account, conquered Armenia and Media using cunning and deceit. In his ability to combine stratagem, military organisation and caution, Tarducci maintains, “the Turk seems a good deal less barbarian than Greek”. It was from the Greeks, in fact, that the Turks—who seemed to him now beatable with a proper combination of discipline and means—had learned to violate pacts and sworn oaths, none the less utilising religion to keep the army in line as Giovio had described years earlier.⁶⁰

The unbeatable Turk had become the beatable Turk, the emblematic Ottoman soldier the Christian soldier, following a trajectory in which the pages of Machiavelli and Giovio always remained intermingled and central. None the less the cultural ambience had been altered by the influx of Neo-Stoicism, and the military context by a new balance of forces. Thus Giovanni Botero, in his *Discorso della lega contra il turco al serenissimo prencipe Maurizio cardinal di Savoia* (1614), could write that the argument for the supposed superiority of the Ottoman military discipline

was perhaps valid before the death of Süleymān: because up until then the sultan going in person to the wars (...), was able to maintain the discipline of his troops (...). But since Süleymān's successors never moved from their hearths, (...) those same troops, imbued with the pleasures of Constantinople and enfeebled thereby, have become more desirous of ease

than of effort, and of mutinying in their own city than of taking war to the enemy (...). From which has followed the defeats of the Turkish armies in Persia, the repeated debacles in Hungary and the uprisings in Anatolia and Arabia. Today, therefore, we can no longer discuss the Turkish forces in the same terms as forty or fifty years ago.⁶¹

Comparison with Asia had helped Christians to reflect on the civil uses of religion and to acknowledge the limits of their martial discipline. But by the end of the sixteenth century, with the at once mythical and realistic figure of the disciplined soldier on the wane, all that was left of the Turk was the image of the despot, the barbarian, the enemy of the faith, while that of the envied empire-builder faded away. It was the Europeans that were surely to be emulated now, who saw themselves as lords of all the world. The times of Giovio and Machiavelli seemed distant for sure.

NOTES

1. R. de Lucinge (1984), *De la naissance, dureé et chute des estats*, ed. M.J. Heath (Geneva: Droz): Book I, Chapters 8–9; Book II, Chapter 1; Book III, Chapters 14–15.
2. S. Suppa (1997), “L’antimachiavelisme de Thomas Bozio”, *Corpus*, 31, 145–173; A. Biondi (2008), “Aspetti della cultura cattolica post-tridentina”, in his *Umanisti, eretici, streghe*, ed. M. Donattini (Modena: Assessorato alla Cultura): 121–164; A. Prosperi (2010), “La religione, il potere, le élites: Incontri italo-spagnoli nell’età della Controriforma”, in his *Eresie e devozioni*, 3 vols. (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura): Vol. I, 61–85.
3. N. Machiavelli (1989), *The Chief Works and Others*, ed. and trans. A. Gilbert, 3 vols. (Durham and London: Duke University Press): Vol. I, 331.
4. E. Cutinelli-Rendina (1999), *Chiesa e religione in Machiavelli* (Pisa and Rome: Istituti Editoriali e Poligrafici Internazionali); M. Viroli (2010), *Machiavelli’s God*, trans. A. Shugaar (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press); D. Cantimori (2013), *Machiavelli, Guicciardini, le idee religiose del Cinquecento* (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale).
5. T. Bozio (1593), *De robore bellico diuturnis et amplis Catholicorum regnis liber unus: Adversus Machiavellum* (Rome: Bartolomeo Bonfadino): 22, 29, 42.
6. See *The Prince*, Chapters 3–4 and *Discourses*, Book I, Chapter 19, and Book II, Introduction.

7. C. Goellner (1961–1978), *Turcica: Die europäischen Türkendrucke des XVI. Jahrhunderts*, 3 vols. (Bucarest, Berlin and Baden Baden: Editura Academiei and Akademie Verlag-Heitz).
8. A. Biondi (1981), “La *Bibliotheca Selecta* di Antonio Possevino: Un progetto di egemonia culturale”, in: G.P. Brizzi (ed.), *La ‘Ratio studiorum’: Modelli culturali e pratiche dei gesuiti in Italia tra Cinque e Seicento* (Rome: Bulzoni): 43–73; L. Balsamo (2006), *Antonio Possevino S.I. bibliografo della Controriforma e diffusione della sua opera in area anglicana* (Florence: Olschki).
9. A. Possevino (1603), *Bibliotheca selecta de ratione studiorum (...) recognita novissime ab eodem, et aucta, tomus secundus*, 2 vols. (Venice: Altobello Salicato): Book XVI, Chapter 21.
10. L. Michelacci (2005), “Introduzione: La nostalgia dell’altro”, in: P. Giovio, *Commentario delle cose de’ turchi* (Bologna: Clueb): 8–67. See also F. Chabod (1967), *Scritti sul Rinascimento* (Turin, Einaudi): 241–267, who repeatedly insists on the breadth of Giovio’s geographical horizons, and T.C.P. Zimmermann (1995), *Paolo Giovio: The Historian and the Crisis of Sixteenth Century Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press): 122–123, 155. On Giovio see also E. Pujeau (2015), *L’Europe et les Turcs: la croisade de l’humaniste Paolo Giovio* (Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Midi).
11. L. Perini (2002), *La vita e i tempi di Pietro Perna* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura).
12. G. Fumagalli, G. Belli and E. Vaccaro Sofia (eds) (1981–1961), *Catalogo delle edizioni romane di Antonio Blado asolano ed eredi (1516–1593) possedute dalle Biblioteche di Roma*, 4 vols. (Rome: Presso i principali librai and Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato).
13. A. Prosperi (1998), “Il principe, il cardinale, il papa: Reginald Pole lettore di Machiavelli”, in: *Cultura e scrittura di Machiavelli* (Rome: Salerno editrice): 241–262; G. Procacci (1995), *Machiavelli nella cultura europea dell’età moderna* (Rome and Bari: Laterza): 85–86; S. Anglo (2005), *Machiavelli, the First Century: Studies in Enthusiasm, Hostility and Irrelevance* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press): 117, 168; A. Petrina (2013), “Reginald Pole and Reception of the *Principe* in Henrician England”, in: A. Arizenzo and A. Petrina (eds), *Machiavellian Encounters in Tudor and Stuart England* (Farnham: Ashgate): 13–27.
14. N. Bisaha (2008), *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press): 54–58 and 178.
15. L. D’Ascia (ed.) (2001), *Il Corano e la tiara: L’epistola a Maometto di Enea Silvio Piccolomini (papa Pio II)* (Bologna: Pendragon): 40–52.
16. Ibidem, 53: “venga il Turco con tutta l’Asia”.

17. P. Moreno (2002), “Paolo Giovio e Francesco Guicciardini”, in: E. Pasquini and P. Prodi (eds), *Bologna nell’età di Carlo V e Guicciardini* (Bologna: Il Mulino): 93–104.
18. E. Raimondi (1972), *Politica e commedia dal Beroaldo a Machiavelli* (Bologna: Il Mulino): 235–252.
19. P. Giovio (2006), *Elogi degli uomini illustri*, ed. F. Minonzio (Turin: Einaudi): 258–261. The suggestion of contact is pursued by C. Dionisotti (1980), *Machiavellerie: Storia e fortuna di Machiavelli* (Turin: Einaudi): 416, and by E. Travi (1983), “Giovio, gli Orti Oricellari e Machiavelli”, *Testo*, 5, 53–61.
20. Ibidem, 54: “niente mi è più conosciuto e familiare”.
21. Giovio, *Commentario*, 69. The dedication is dated 22 January 1531.
22. Ibidem, 169: “La disciplina militare è con tanta giustizia e severità regolata da Turchi che si può dire che avanzino quella de gli antichi Greci e Romani”; “con una pazza persuasion ch’ognuno abbia scritto in faccia come e quando abbia da morire”.
23. Ibidem, 151: “come fossero tanti frati dell’osservanza”. On the portrait collection see G. Le Thiec (1992), “L’entrée des grands Turcs dans le Museo de Paolo Giovio”, *Mélanges de l’École Française de Rome. Italie et Méditerranée*, 104, no. 2, 781–830.
24. Giovio, *Commentario*, 97–98.
25. Ibidem, 128, 130, 144.
26. Ibidem, 150–151 (concerning the conquest of Rhodes), 156–157 (“ho inteso da uomini degni di fede (...) che spesso dice che a lui tocca di ragione l’Imperio di Roma e di tutto il Ponente per essere legittimo successore di Costantino”). On claims to be the heirs of Rome at the court of Süleyman, particularly in the time of the Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha, executed in 1536, see K. Şahin (2013), *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman: Narrating the Sixteenth-Century Ottoman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press): 49–87. See also Pier Mattia Tommasino’s chapter in this volume.
27. Giovio, *Commentario*, 171: “il dado de l’Imperio di tutto il mondo”; “fare le provesioni da timidi e da paurosi, né attendere alle vane e dannose parole di quelli che non istimando li Turchi braveggiano avanti che vengano alla prova”.
28. E. Valeri (2007), ““Historici bugiardi”: La polemica cinquecentesca contro Paolo Giovio”, in: A. Merola et al. (eds), *Storia sociale e politica: Omaggio a Rosario Villari* (Milan: FrancoAngeli): 115–137: 129.
29. L. Hanke (1959), *Aristotle and the American Indians: A Study in Race Prejudice in the Modern World* (London: Hollis & Carter); F. Castilla Urbano (2013), *El pensamiento de Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales).

30. M. Meserve (2008), *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press).
31. J.G. de Sepúlveda (1995–2012), *Obras completas*, 17 vols. (Pozoblanco: Ayuntamiento de Pozoblanco): Vol. VII, 329–346.
32. A. Coroleu (1992), “Il *Democrats primus* di Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda: una nuova prima condanna contro il Machiavelli”, *Il Pensiero Politico*, 25, 263–268.
33. J.G. de Sepúlveda (1535), *De convenientia militaris disciplinae cum christiana religione dialogus, qui inscribitur Democrates* (Rome: Antonio Blado), introduction. See Sepúlveda, *Obras*, Vol. XV, 80–192.
34. J. Osório (1542), *De nobilitate civili libri duo: De nobilitate Christiana libri tres* (Lisbon: Luís Rodrigues): fols. 98^r, 106^r–119^v. See also J. Osório (1549), *De gloria libri V* (Coimbra: Francisco Correia), in which issue is taken with Machiavelli even in a work heavily influenced by the same, dating back to his Bologna period. For the Turks, see fols. 70^v–71^r. This author is also discussed in Giuseppe Marcocci’s chapter in this volume.
35. A. Mas (1967), *Le Turcs dans la littérature espagnole du Siècle d’or*, 2 vols. (Paris: Centre de Recherches Hispaniques): Vol. I, 124–129; Vol. II, 177–188; A. Merle (2003), *Le miroir Ottoman: Une image politique des hommes dans la littérature géographique espagnole et française, XVIe–XVIIe siècles* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de Paris-Sorbonne).
36. V. Díaz Tanco de Fregenal (1547), *Libro intitulado Palinodia de la nephanda y fiera nacion de los Turcos* (Orense: Author’s edition): “estando en Bolonia vi un librezillo en lengua toscana llamado *Comentario delas guerras delos turcos* (...). El qual libro (...) me parecio obra de mucha estima” (Dedication, fol. 2^r); “tan liberal con los soldados que les compra con esta gran virtud los animos” (fol. 53^r); “falange macedonica conque Alexandro Magno conquisto todo el Levante (...), aunque hay gran diferencia. Porque los reyes antiguos de Macedonia eran nobles y virtuosos de nacion, y los turcos son viles y crueles” (fols. 55^v–56^r).
37. V. Roca (1556), *Hystoria en la quel se trata de la origen y guerras que han tenido los turcos* (Valencia: s.n.): “hombres simples, los cuales suelen maravillarse y temblar de loque oyen dezir delos Turcos”, “y que no son aquellos infieles tan bravos como se pintan” (Dedication, fol. 2^v); “no era muy devoto de residir personalmente en su obispado, si no que se andava siempre en Roma tras los papas y cardenales” (fol. 88^r); “en muchas cosas viciosos y barbaros, pero en otras tienen buenas costumbres y criança” (fol. 132^v). See also fol. 152^r.
38. G. Jiménez de Quesada (1991), *El antiJovio*, ed. G. Hernández Peñalosa, 2 vols. (Bogotá: Instituto Caro y Cuervo): Vol. II, 193: “alabar al turco”. For further accusations of Turkophilia aimed at Giovio see his letter of 1551 to Ippolito d’Este the Younger, published in P. Giovio (1956–1958), *Lettore*,

- ed. G.G. Ferraro, 2 vols. (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato): Vol. II, 189–191.
39. A. Cambini (1529), *Libro della origine de turchi et imperio degli ottomani* (Florence: Heirs of Filippo di Giunta): “le ceremonie et riti della fede nella quale erano nati” (fol. 25^r); “non di huomini potenti, o ricchi, ma di plebei et poveri, che per il zelo della fede armati si erano voluti esporre al pericolo della morte (...), il che difficilmente da predicatori si può persuadere à principi, e altri potenti del seculo” (fol. 28^v). On the author see E. Guerrieri (2008), “Fra storia e letteratura: Andrea di Antonio Cambini”, *Medioevo e Rinascimento*, n.s., 22, no. 19, 375–420; L. D’Ascia (2010), “L’impero machiavellico: L’immagine della Turchia nei trattatisti italiani del Cinquecento e del primo Seicento”, *Quaderns d’Italià*, 15, 99–116.
 40. F. Lestringant (1985), “Guillaume Postel e l’obsession turque”, in: *Guillaume Postel 1581–1981: Actes du Colloque International d’Avranches* (Paris: Éditions de La Maisnie): 265–298; I. McCabe Baghdantz (2008), *Orientalism in Early Modern France: Eurasian Trade, Exoticism, and the Ancien Régime* (Oxford and New York: Berg): 15–36.
 41. G. Postel (1560), *De la république des Turcs, et là où l’occasion s’offrera, des moeurs, loy de tous les Muhamédistes* (Poitiers: Enguibert de Marnef): 89 (on religion). The third part is dedicated to the issue of Ottoman strength and discipline. Giovio’s name appears on p. 22, and from him are derived a number of opinions on the conduct of war (p. 44).
 42. See *The Prince*, Chapters 4, 7 and 19, and *Discourses*, Book I, Chapter 26.
 43. B. Ramberti (1539), *Libri tre delle cose de turchi* (Venice: The Sons of Aldo): “astutissimo huomo” (fol. 26^v); “che fingeva et costumi santi et moderati” (fol. 27^r); “Quando che il Signor Turco s’impatronisce di alcuna provincia, di subito rovina dalle fondamenta tutte o la maggior parte di quelle fortezze, che non gli paion molto necessarie da esser conservate, et disfa le cittati, riducendole in tristi et piccioli casali. Oltra di ciò spegne, et estingue del tutto gli grandi et nobili che in esse vi ritrova” (fol. 31^v); “permette che viva ogn’uno nella fede ch’era, perciò che sfornandoli a nova relligione, oltra che li metteria in disperatione, perderia anco la speranza di farseli fedeli” (fols. 31^v–32^r); “gli popoli sudditi, che disarmati non possono, et convengono per forza star soggetti (...), quando havessero le armi in mano, et si sentissero gagliardi, aspirariano alla libertà” (32^v).
 44. A. Danti (1573), *Osservationi di diverse historie et d’altri particolari degni di memoria* (Venice: Matteo Boselli): “api né tanti marinari d’esperienza” (fol. 2^r); “naturale viltà et debolezza” (fol. 4^r); “ogni turco in casa sua, o in campo havrebbe un christiano suo servo, che l’ucciderebbe, et che nella battaglia, se ben rinegato fosse, l’abbandonerebbe” (fol. 4^v). See also fols.

- 5^r–5^v and 12^v–13^v. On this work see P. Cherchi (1988), *Polimattia di riuso: Mezzo secolo di plagio, 1539–1589* (Rome: Bulzoni): 77–83. On Danti and Porcacchi see P. Cherchi (ed.) (1999), *Ricerche sulle selve rinascimentali* (Ravenna: Longo).
45. G. Ruscelli (1572), *Sopplimento nell'Istorie di monsignor Paolo Giovio (...) et un consiglio di monsignor Giovio raccolto dalle consulte di papa Leone Decimo per far l'impresa contra infedeli, di nuovo ristampato et con somma diligenza corretto* (Venice: Altobello Salicato): 99: “mai non si sentì giuoco, non si vide arma sfodrata se non in battaglia, né mai si udi bestemmia, per non dir de’ furti e sforzamenti de’ quali errori non è memoria tra di loro”. See also pp. 5 (defence of Giovio) and 89–100 (*Consiglio*).
46. S. Yérasimos (1988), “De la collection de voyages à l’histoire universelle: *La Historia Universale de’ Turchi* de Francesco Sansovino”, *Turcica*, 20, 19–41; E. Bonora (1994), *Ricerche su Francesco Sansovino imprenditore librario e letterato* (Venice: Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti): 97–137.
47. F. Sansovino (1560), *Dell’historia universale dell’origine et imperio de’ turchi parte prima* (Venice: Francesco Sansovino and Co.): “disciplina della militia” (Dedication, fols. 2^r); “dapocaggine” (Dedication 2^v); “genti disciplinabili (...) nella militia sono tanto eccellenti, che il mondo con suo gran danno se ne maraviglia (...). Il proprio e principal nervo della potenza di quel signore consiste nella predetta obbedienza. Concosia ch’adorando coloro il suo principe, et credendo ch’egli sia poco inferiore alla grandezza di Dio, si reputano per segnalato favore il morire, se non per le sue mani, almeno per la sua volontà” (fol. 16^v).
48. F. Sansovino (1571), *L’Annali overo le vite de’ principi et signori della casa Othomana* (Venice: Giacomo Sansovino), fol. 134^r (“faceva professione di mantener la parola et d’osservar grandemente la fede”).
49. F. Sansovino (1582), *Historia universale dell’origine et imperio de’ turchi raccolta et in diversi luoghi di nuovo ampliata; et riformata in molte sue parti per ordine della Santa Inquisizione* (Venice: Altobello Salicato).
50. J.M. De Bujanda (ed.) (1984–2002), *Index des livres interdits*, 11 vols. (Sherbrooke and Geneva: Centre d’Etudes de la Renaissance and Droz): Vol. 10, 350; Vol. 11, 124, 415; Vatican City, Archivio della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede, *Index, Protocolli 0*, Antonio Posio *secretarius* (1571–1580), *Additiones Romae 1579*, fols. 379^v and 550^r.
51. F. Benvoglienti (1570), *Discorso per qual cagione per la religione non si sia fatta guerra fra’ Gentili, & perche si faccia tra Christiani* (Florence: Bartolomeo Sermartelli).

52. M. Catto (2012), *Cristiani senza pace: La Chiesa, gli eretici e la guerra nella Roma del Cinquecento* (Rome: Donzelli).
53. The work *De causis bellorum religionis gratia excitatorum: Liber ad M. Antonium Amulum cardinalem* is published in U. Foglietta (1838), *Anecdota*, ed. V. Alizeri (Genoa: Officina Ferrandiana): 137–190.
54. U. Foglietta (1595), *De causis magnitudinis Imperii Turcici & Virtutis ac Felicitatis Turcarum in bellis perpetuae* (Lipsia: Michael Lantzenberger and Henning Grosse): fols. B1^r–B3^v. In this edition the work is followed by other treatises on Turkish matters.
55. L. Soranzo (1600), *L’Ottomanno*, 4th ed. (Naples: Costantino Vitale): Part I, 35–37 and 57.
56. Ibidem, Part I, 60: “secondo il comandamento del loro legislator Mehemedo” and “più si confidano combattendo nella moltitudine, nell’opinione c’hanno del Fato, e nello strepito de’ loro bellici stromenti, e nell’horribil grido delle barbare voci, che non fanno nel buon’ordine, e nella vera disciplina”.
57. Ibidem, Part III, 168–201. For a more thorough analysis see V. Lavenia (2015), “I libri, le armi e le missioni: Conversione e guerra antiotomana in un testo di Lazzaro Soranzo”, in: V. Lavenia and S. Pavone (eds), *Missioni, saperi e adattamento tra Europa e imperi non cristiani* (Macerata: Eum): 165–202.
58. J. Lipsius (2002), *De militia Romana libri quinque: De constantia libri duo*, facsimile reprint, ed. W. Weber (Hildesheim: Olms); A. Gentili (2011), *The Wars of the Romans (De armis Romanis)*, ed. B. Kingsbury and B. Straumann, trans. D. Lupher (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press).
59. The oration is published in S. Gentili (1763–1769), *Opera omnia*, 8 vols. (Naples: Giovanni Gravier): Vol. V: 263–278.
60. Anglo, *Machiavelli*, 485–490.
61. “(...) fu forse vera fino alla morte di Solimano: perché sino allora, andando i gran Signori personalmente alla guerra (...), mantenevano viva la disciplina della loro militia (...). Ma, non si essendo i successori di Solimano mossi mai di casa, (...) quella militia, intrisasi delle delitie di Constantinopoli, e in quelle avvilitasi, n’è diventata più vaga d’otio, che di travaglio, e di ammutinamenti nell’istessa città di Constantinopoli, che di guerra co’ nimici (...). Quindi son nate le sconfitte de gli esserciti Turcheschi in Persia, e le tante rotte, ricevute in Ongheria, e le ribellioni della Natolia, e dell’Arabia. Si che, non si deve discorrere delle forze turchesche hoggidì, come quaranta, o cinquanta anni sono, si discorreva”, G. Botero (1614), *Discorso della lega contra il turco al serenissimo prencipe Maurizio cardinal di Savoia* (Turin: Giovanni Domenico Tarino): 21–23.

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Machiavelli and the Antiquarians

Carlo Ginzburg

I

In an illuminating essay, the Italian historian Adriano Prosperi demonstrated how the English cardinal Reginald Pole, the early champion of anti-Machiavellianism, made broad use of Machiavelli in his *De summo Pontifice Christi in terris vicario*, a treatise on the authority of the pope written in 1549, while its author was running for that office, and published in Leuven twenty years after his defeat in Conclave.¹ Similar cases, concerning less known figures, illustrate the often unpredictable directions of Machiavelli's reception. Yet even Machiavelli read by the antiquarians, of whom we shall speak here, is closely tied to the political writer we are most familiar with, who ponders over "all the dominions that have had or now have authority over men".²

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II

These pages are a small fragment of an ongoing project dedicated to the emergence, between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, of a comparative approach to religions—an approach far older than the late nineteenth-century codification of the history of religion as an academic discipline. Older, yes, but how much older? Philippe Borgeaud has repeatedly emphasised that this comparative approach has its origins in the Greco-Roman world, where myths and gods were easily translated and assimilated from one culture to another.³ However, this apparent continuity conceals some crucial discontinuities. Guy G. Stroumsa listed four of them: (a) relations between Christians and Jews, and between their respective sacred texts; (b) the discovery of New World populations; (c) the Protestant Reformation; (d) the Renaissance.⁴ In each of these cases religious comparison was used to aggressive ends, marked by polemics, persecution, forced conversion and massacres. Unlike the *interpretatio Romana* (Roman interpretation), which flowered in the welcoming imperial pantheon, the comparative approach to religion established itself in the Christian context as an instrument of battle. A critically detached attitude toward religious pluralism was born of violent, bloody roots.

I intend to qualify the fourth of these elements listed by Stroumsa, dwelling on the work of Machiavelli and its reception.⁵ This reception made a finite, though not negligible contribution to the elaboration—again, in a polemical tone—of the comparative approach to religion.⁶

III

To speak of “the work of Machiavelli” in this context means to implicitly evoke some well-known passages, such as the juxtaposition of Moses with Cyrus, Romulus and Theseus in Chapter 6 of *The Prince*, or those chapters of the *Discourses on Livy*, which deal with religion in Ancient Rome and its social and political implications (Book I, Chapters 11–15). Less known, in fact escaping (if I am not mistaken) the attention of modern readers, is the *incipit* of *The Life of Castruccio Castracani*, the biography of the Lucchese condottiero (1281–1328) written by Machiavelli in 1520 and published for the first time along with the first edition of *The Prince* by the Roman printer Antonio Blado in 1532:

Those who consider it, my dearest Zanobi and Luigi, think it wonderful that all, or the larger part, of those who in this world have done very great things, and who have been excellent among the men of their era, have in their birth and origin been humble and obscure, or at least have been beyond all measure afflicted by fortune. Because all of them either have been exposed to wild beasts or have had fathers so humble that, being ashamed of them, they have made themselves out sons of Jove or of some other God.⁷

The readers of Machiavelli, beginning with Zanobi Buondelmonti and Luigi Alamanni, to whom *The Life of Castruccio Castracani* is dedicated, as well as their friends, would have caught the impious allusion implicit in the words “or of some other God”.⁸ It is an allusion highlighted by the preterition which immediately follows: “Who these are, since many of them are known to everybody, would be boring to repeat and little acceptable to readers; hence, as superfluous, I omit it”.⁹

Perhaps in writing these sarcastic words Machiavelli was reminded of an equally scandalous passage (this too escaping the attention of modern commentators) from the *Declamatio* (1440) of Lorenzo Valla on the supposed “donation of Constantine”. Among the arguments used to demonstrate the falsity of that document, Valla quotes the passage which deals with its physical location: “on the venerable body of the blessed Peter”. And he comments:

When I was a boy, I remember asking someone who had written the *Book of Job*. When he answered, “Job himself”, I asked the further question of how therefore he managed to mention his own death. This can be said of many other books, although it is not appropriate to discuss them here.¹⁰

By way of an implicit reference to the death of Moses at the end of *Deuteronomy* (34:5), Valla makes it clear that Moses himself could not have authored the Pentateuch. Through the implicit comparison of Moses to figures such as Theseus, Cyrus or Romulus, Machiavelli makes a mockery of the divine nature of Christ.

It is a passage that illustrates what might be the aggressive potential of a comparative approach to religion in a Christian context. The roots of this attitude can be seen in the environment in which Machiavelli came of age: his father Bernardo appears among the interlocutors in the dialogue *De legibus et iudiciis*, composed in 1483 by the Florentine

chancellor Bartolomeo Scala, and in which are named Moses, Zoroaster, Hermes Trismegistus, Numa, Zalmoxis, Muhammad and so forth.¹¹ The importance attributed to the religion of the Romans in Chapter 11 of Book I of the *Discourses on Livy*, developed further in the subsequent chapters, immediately lays the premise for a generalisation: “And truly no one who did not have recourse to God ever gave to a people unusual laws, because without that they would not be accepted”¹²

The reference to “God”, without further qualification, allows, after the rapid evocation of Lycurgus and Solon, for an immediate shift of the discussion to “the present”.¹³ For Machiavelli, the possibility of comparing different religions was absolutely obvious.

IV

Machiavelli’s comparison was fed by a wide variety of readings, reflection and a most vigorous imagination—not by scholarly study. Even if Machiavelli was neither erudite nor an antiquarian, his pages on the religion of the Romans attracted the attention of the antiquarians.¹⁴ As Sydney Anglo has noted, two works by the Lyonese noble Guillaume Du Choul demonstrate this: the *Discours sur la castrametation et discipline militaire des Romains (...)* *des bains et antiques exercitations grecques et romaines* and the *Discours de la religion des anciens Romains*, published in Lyon in 1555 and in 1556, respectively, and promptly translated by the Florentine Gabriele Simeoni, a well-learned antiquarian himself, in 1556 and 1557, respectively.¹⁵ Both works are accompanied by illustrations which would have a long influence and be copied often (Nicolas Poussin made use of them, for example). Some of them were inspired by the drawings—now lost—that the Italian painter Jacopo Ripanda had made of Trajan’s column.¹⁶ Du Choul repeatedly drew upon documentation he had collected in 1538–1540 to compose a work of which only a fragment remains, preserved in a splendid manuscript that was dedicated to Francis I and is now kept at the Royal Library of Turin. It is titled *Des antiquités romaines. Premier livre*.¹⁷ So the image of two boxers, portrayed in the Turinese manuscript and taken from an engraving by Marco Dente, re-emerges in the illustration which accompanies the *Discours (...)* *des bains et antiques exercitations grecques et romaines*.¹⁸ Other examples could be made as well.¹⁹ But the intention to publish the

work *Des antiquités romaines*, continually expressed by Du Choul after the death of King Francis I of France (1547), remained unrealised.²⁰

In Du Choul's works, the reproductions of medallions, or other various objects, alternate with transcriptions of epitaphs. In a passage from the *Discours de la religion des anciens Romains*, Du Choul speaks of an "epitaph now in Turin, which I have drawn from my book *On the epigrams of all Gaul*" (this work has not been preserved).²¹ The Italian translation is slightly different: "an epitaph which one sees in Turin, already shown to me by Simeoni".²² The translator, Gabriele Simeoni, punctiliously asserted his priority, as is confirmed some years later in his *Illustratione degli epitaffi et medaglie antiche*:

This epitaph recalled to my mind a greater and nicer one, which, coming back from Piedmont, I borrowed to the Lord of the mountains of Dauphiné [i.e., *Du Choul himself*], who used it in his book on the ancient religion of the Romans, printed in French in Lyon by Guillaume Rouillé and translated into Italian by me. I attached again this epitaph, as it is mine and concerns my argument.²³

This insistence should not be taken for granted, given the social distance that separated Simeoni and the noble Du Choul. One catches a glimpse of a close relationship, though perhaps not free of tensions.²⁴ Upon close examination, an element emerges which fed the antiquarian passions of both men.

In the *Discours sur la castrametation*, after quoting a passage from the *De haruspicum responsis* in which Cicero attributes Roman military supremacy to their piety, Du Choul observes: "Religion in an army is certainly a necessary thing to govern it, and to govern a kingdom or a republic, as well, for religion is the cause of good order, and good order makes for good fortune, and from good fortune lucky enterprises come".²⁵

In his version, Simeoni renders the implicit reference to the chapter "On the religion of the Romans" in the *Discourses* (Book I, Chapter 11), with words nearly identical to those of Machiavelli: "This [religion] is cause of good order, and the good order in turn the cause of good fortune, and upon good fortune the happy outcomes of enterprises depend".²⁶ At the beginning of the passage just cited, Simeoni inserts a further Machiavellian touch, absent in the text of Du Choul: "Certainly

religion is very useful to an army, as well as a militia of its own soldiers is necessary to safeguard a kingdom or a republic”.²⁷

The subject of *armi proprie* (“own arms”) was particularly meaningful for the Florentine exile Simeoni, who discusses it more broadly in his *Illustratione de gli epitaffi et medaglie antiche*, contrasting *legionari* (“legionaries”) and *mercennari* (“mercenaries”). Among the examples illustrating the superiority of the “legionaries”, that is, the non-mercenary militias, Simeoni refers to the unfortunate result of the 1530 siege of Florence.²⁸ From a very young age Simeoni had been connected to Donato Giannotti, one of the major figures in the defense of Florence, who was in France from 1550, in the service of the cardinal of Tournon.²⁹

V

Du Choul could have arrived at Machiavelli independently of Simeoni. Nevertheless, some passages from Du Choul’s original seem a mere shell—a faint echo of the Italian translation. Let us take the beginning of the previously mentioned section of *Discours de la castrametation*:

We know this from the noblest sentence of Cicero’s *On the Response of the Haruspices*, when he told us that the Romans, though they were not as numerous as the Spaniards, as strong as the Gauls, as astute as the Africans, as learned as the Greeks, or as spiritual as the Latins, with piety and religion and aided only by their wisdom (through which they had seen that all things are governed by the immortal Gods) have overcome all kinds of people and foreign nations.³⁰

In his translation from French to Italian Simeoni turned Cicero’s *sed* (but)—“*sed pietate ac religione atque hac una sapientia*” (*On the Response of the Haruspices*, 19, 23)—into a very Machiavellian *nondimeno* (nonetheless): “nonetheless, through their piety, religion and singular wisdom (...).”³¹

Du Choul’s translation was preceded by a dedication to Catherine de’ Medici, the Florentine noblewoman raised to the throne of France, and was signed by the printer Guillaume Rouillé: “The purity and sweetness of the Tuscan language seems to be (...) held in the highest esteem after Greek and Latin, the Tuscans themselves strive every day to make it more beautiful; the foreign literates admire it, and just as Ariosto, Bembo and Sannazzaro have done, try to imitate it in their writings”.³²

Behind the printer, who is a transparent figurehead, once again the voice of Simeoni appears: the *Discours de la castrametation* allows for “knowing that the greatness and prosperity of the Roman Empire derived from nothing but the virtue of its own army, its justice, and frequent worship (though just as false as ours, ordained by the Catholic church, is redeeming and true)”.³³

For Machiavelli, the *armi proprie* had to draw inspiration from the fierce religion of the Romans, as opposed to the meek Christian faith. Yet in the writings of Du Choul, this juxtaposition opens the door to confrontation and comparison:

After having discussed it at length, I often wondered how the Gentiles dwelled so enduringly in their false, superstitious and erroneous religion, leaving ours which is true and sent by God (...). The Romans could as well believe that IESUS CHRIST had made the dead come back to life, like their Asclepius, whom they made rise, full of light, to the heavens and thought that he was born from a virgin, as they believe that Vesta was the virgin mother of Gods. And while they were refused to believe that our Lord gave sight to the blind, they were sure that the Emperor Vespasian performed the same miracle in Alexandria.³⁴

Pagan superstitions are similar to Christian rites, Asclepius and Vespasian are comparable to Christ, and so forth. A poisonous analogy, as it is reversible.³⁵ The uniqueness of the Christian religion was being undermined. All of this paved the way to the conclusion of Du Choul’s *Discours*:

And if we look with curiosity, we will find that many institutions of our religion have been taken and translated from Egyptian and Gentile ceremonies, such as tunics and gowns, crowns of priests, inclinations of the head around the altar, the rite of sacrifice, the music of temples, adorations, prayers and supplications, processions and litanies, and many other things that our priests usurp and refer to an only God, IESUS CHRIST, whereas the ignorance of Gentiles, false religion and mad superstition, attributed them to their Gods and to mortal men after their consecrations.³⁶

Simeoni’s translation differs slightly: “(...) and many other things that a good spirit can easily compare, after having well considered the former and the latter ceremonies”.³⁷ The “good spirit” capable of grasping all

of this would not have been misled by the predictable sentence which immediately follows: “The only difference is that those of the Gentiles were false and superstitious, while ours are Christian and Catholic, since they are in honor of God, the omnipotent Father, and Christ, his son, to whom be eternal glory”.³⁸

VI

Direct or indirect echoes of Machiavelli can often be discerned in sixteenth-century comparisons of pagan and Christian rites, made through a perspective of veiled hostility to the latter.³⁹ But this antiquarianism, born of robust political origins, was open to a much broader comparison, stimulated by the first contact between Europeans and New World populations.⁴⁰ Among the many examples of the slow transformation of antiquarianism into ethnography, one might mention the work of another Lyonnaise antiquarian, the jurist Claude Guichard’s *Funerailles et diverses manieres d’ensevelir des Romains, Grecs et autres nations, tant anciens que modernes*, published in Lyon in 1581 by Jean de Tournes, the same publisher as Simeoni’s treatise on ancient medals and epitaphs. Guichard, who had attended the University of Turin, dedicated the book to Duke Charles Emmanuel I of Savoy (r. 1580–1630), remembering that he had offered him a translation of Livy some years earlier.⁴¹ Guichard, too, begins his treatise with an exaltation of the “civility, military art and religion (*police, art militaire et religion*)” of the Romans: “Furthermore, of these three things not only do the establishment, greatness and safety of every well-ordered republic consist, but from the awareness of them the entire and perfect knowledge of history and antiquities of the Romans also depends”.⁴²

The first two books, which treat the funerary rites of the Romans and the Greeks respectively (Guichard declares that he is not following a chronological order), are followed by a great comparative survey of funerary rites across the entire world. Guichard acknowledges those who had preceded him: the historian Biondo Flavio, the jurist Alessandro d’Alessandro, the humanist Celio Rodigino, the cartographer Wolfgang Lazius, and Lilio Gregorio Giraldi, author of *De sepulchris et vario sepeliendi ritu*, published in Basle in 1539.⁴³ However, Guichard breaks from his predecessors in dedicating a section to funerary rites in the New World: “We will find all things new and they will be no less pleasant for their novelty than the previous for their antiquity”.⁴⁴ From Guichard’s

perspective, the New World is not inferior to the Old, but rather the inhabitants of the West Indies, and in particular those of Peru, “have done better than all other nations in sumptuousness of tombs and sepulchres”.⁴⁵ Guichard does not hesitate in comparing the funeral chants of Béarn and Gascony to those of “these poor Americans (*ces povres Américaines*)”.⁴⁶ After concluding the “universal discourses on funerals (*discours universel des funerailles*)”, he moves on to the Egyptians, ancient and modern Jews, and Christians.

VII

Here New and Old Worlds are juxtaposed; however, in the climate of religious war French Protestants and Catholics insistently and reciprocally accused one another of barbarism. We call “barbarous and savage” the Margajas and the Tupinambás, a Protestant libel wrote: but at least, those savages only devour each other; the Catholics who defile tombs are far worse than the Margajas or the Tupinambá. The Catholic Henri de Sponde, referring to the “erudite treatise *Des Funerailles* written by Claude Guichard”, objected: cemeteries are sacred places, which are protected from heretical contamination.⁴⁷ The unquenchable mutual hatred which burns among the “savages” of Brazil, wrote the Protestant Jean de Léry, is imitated by “those atheists such as Machiavelli and his disciples (of whom France is to its detriment full) who against Christian doctrine teach and practice that new services may never efface old injuries”.⁴⁸ “Never have new benefits erased old injuries”, writes Machiavelli (*Discourses*, Book III, Chapter 4).⁴⁹ A cold remark, which Léry turns into a vehemently anti-Christian homily. The New World was seen through the lens of the Old, and vice versa. A detached approach to religions fed antiquarianism, which in turn fuelled the polemic between them. What we call a comparative history of religion emerged, laboriously and painfully, from this bloody tangle.

(Translated by Peter L.K. Lieberman)

NOTES

1. A. Prosperi (1998), “Il principe, il cardinale e il papa: Reginald Pole lettore di Machiavelli”, in: *Cultura e scrittura di Machiavelli* (Rome: Salerno editore): 241–262. The essay is not cited by S. Anglo (2005),

- Machiavelli, the First Century: Studies in Enthusiasm, Hostility, and Irrelevance* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press): 115–142.
2. N. Machiavelli (1989), *The Chief Works and Others*, transl. A. Gilbert, 3 vols. (Durham and New York: Duke University Press), Vol. I, 11.
 3. P. Borgeaud (2009), “Observe, Describe, Compare: A Small Meditation”, *Historia Religionum*, 1, 13–20: 15. And see also by P. Borgeaud (2004), *Aux origines de l’histoire des religions* (Paris: Seuil).
 4. G.G. Stroumsa (2010), *A New Science: The Discovery of Religion in the Age of Reason* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press): 5–6 (but the book focuses on the following, seventeenth-century phase).
 5. Machiavelli’s name is only briefly mentioned in Stroumsa’s book. See *ibidem*, 150–153.
 6. Here I develop some themes pointed out in another essay of mine: C. Ginzburg (2010), “The Letter Kills: On Some Implications of 2 Corinthians 3, 6”, *History and Theory* 49, 71–89.
 7. Machiavelli, *The Chief Works*, Vol. II, 533.
 8. L. Strauss (1952), “Persecution and the Art of Writing” [1941], in his *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (Glencoe: The Free Press): 22–37, is still fundamental.
 9. Machiavelli, *The Chief Works*, Vol. II, 533. In the introduction to N. Machiavelli (1986), *La vita di Castruccio Castracani*, ed. R. Brakkee (Naples: Liguori), 27–28, fn. 34, P. Trovato comments on the passage, without understanding its implications. Similarly, J.H. Whitfield (1953), “Machiavelli and Castruccio”, *Italian Studies*, 8, 1–28: 12–13; L. Green (1987), “Machiavelli’s *Vita di Castruccio Castracani* and its Lucchese Model”, *Italian Studies*, 12, 37–55: 48–50; M. Palumbo (1998), “Storia e scrittura della storia: *La vita di Castruccio Castracani*”, in: *Cultura e scrittura di Machiavelli* (Rome: Salerno editore): 145–164: 152–153. Palumbo, however, apropos of another passage, which follows shortly after—“In Castruccio charm increased with the years, and in everything he showed ability and prudence” (Machiavelli, *The Chief Works*, Vol. II, 535)—asks himself, doubtfully, if it were not an echo of *Luke* 2, 40: “And the child grew, waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him”.
 10. L. Valla (2008), *On the Donation of Constantine*, transl. Glen W. Bowersock (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press): 56.
 11. A. Brown (1979), *Bartolomeo Scala, 1430–1497, Chancellor of Florence: The Humanist as Bureaucrat* (Princeton: Princeton University Press). On that passage see C. Ginzburg (2012), “Machiavelli, the Exception and the Rule: Notes from a Research in Progress”, in: D. Knox and N. Ordine (eds.), *Renaissance Learning and Letters: In memoriam Giovanni Aquilecchia* (London and Turin: The Warburg Institute and Nino

- Aragno, 2012): 73–91. See also R. Fredona (2008), “Carnival of Law: Bartolomeo Scala’s *Dialogue de legibus et iudiciis*”, *Viator*, 29, 193–214: 209.
12. Machiavelli, *The Chief Works*, Vol. I, 225.
 13. Ibidem.
 14. In the seminal essay by A. Momigliano (1979), “Ancient History and the Antiquarian” [1950], in his *Contributo alla storia degli studi classici*, 2nd ed. (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura), 67–106, Machiavelli’s name is absent.
 15. R.A. Cooper (2003), “L’antiquaire Guillaume Du Choul et son cercle lyonnais”, in: G. Défaux (ed.), *Lyon et l’illustration de la langue française à la Renaissance* (Lyon: ENS Éditions): 261–286 (with ample bibliography). Other information is provided by J. Guillemain (1993), “L’antiquaire et le libraire: Du bon usage de la medaille dans le publications lyonnaises de la Renaissance”, *Travaux de l’Institut d’Histoire de l’Art de Lyon*, 16, 35–66 (Guillemain is also the author of a yet unpublished doctoral dissertation on Du Choul). On Simeoni see T. Renucci (1943), *Un aventurier des lettres au XVIe siècle: Gabriel Symeon, floréntin, 1509–1570?* (Paris: Didier). See also Anglo, *Machiavelli*, 34 and *passim*, which does not dwell on the passages analysed here. On the reception of Du Choul in Vicenza’s cultural milieu see G. Beltramini (2009), “Palladio e le storie di Polibio”, in: G. Beltramini (ed.), *Andrea Palladio e l’architettura della battaglia con le illustrazioni inedite alle Storie di Polibio* (Venice: Marsilio), 12–77: 17.
 16. G. Agosti and V. Farinella (1984–1986), “Calore del marmo: Pratica e tipologia delle deduzioni iconografiche”, in: S. Settim (ed.), *Memoria dell’antico nell’arte italiana*, 3 vols. (Turin: Einaudi): Vol. I, 375–444: 418 (the date of the first edition of *Discours de la religion* must be corrected in ‘Lione 1557’).
 17. Turin, Biblioteca Reale (henceforth BR), ms. *Varia* 212, *Des antiquités Romaines. Premier livre fait par le commandement du Roy par M. Guillaume Choul Lyonnais, conseiller du dict seigneur et Bailly des Montaignes du Dauphiné*. The importance of this manuscript was pointed out by F. Haskell (1993), *History and Its Images: Art and the Interpretation of the Past* (New Haven: Yale University Press): 16. On this topic see the excellent essay by M.D. Orth (2003), “Lyon et Rome à l’antique: Les illustrations des *Antiquités romaines* de Guillaume Du Choul”, in: G. Défaux (ed.), *Lyon et l’illustration de la langue française à la Renaissance* (Lyon: ENS Éditions): 287–308.
 18. BR, ms. *Varia* 212, fol. 35v: “Combat des cestes entre Dares et Entellus, selon la description de Virgile”; G. Du Choul (1555), *Discours sur la cas-trametation et discipline militaire des Romains (...) des bains et antiques*

- exercitations grecques et romaines. De la religion des anciens Romains* (Lyon: Guillaume Rouillé), 34. See Orth, “Lyon et Rome”, 295, and the entry by E. Borea (1960–), “Dente, Marco”, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* (Rome: Istituto dell’Enciclopedia Italiana): Vol. XXXVIII, 792, referring to A. Krug (1975), “Ein römisches Relief und Raffael”, *Städel-Jahrbuch*, 5, 31–36.
19. In the *Discours sur la castrametation* a reference to the battle standard is followed by this comment: “come l'on verra plus amplement au livre des mes Antiquités de Romme” (“as one will see more amply in my book on Roman antiquities”). The illustration at p. 15 (“Draconarii, et labariferi, Porteinseignes du Dragon et du Labarum, cornette de l'Empereur”) is to be compared with that in BR, ms. *Varia* 212, fol. 80^r.
 20. The work should have been divided in three books. See G. Du Choul (1556), *Discours de la religion des anciens Romains (...) et illustré d'un grand nombre de medailles, et de plusieurs belles figures, retirées de marbres antiques, qui se treuvent à Rome, et par nostre Gaule* (Lyon: Guillaume Rouillé): 248. On the intention to have the work published, see p. 201.
 21. Du Choul, *Discours de la religion*, 142: “Épitaphe qui se trouve à Turin, que j'ai retiré de mon livre *Des Epigrammes de toute la Gaule*”.
 22. G. Du Choul (1559), *Discorso della religione antica de Romani (...) insieme con un altro simile discorso della castrametatione et bagni antichi de Romani tradotti in Toscano da M. Gabriel Simeoni fiorentino* (Lyon: Guillaume Rouillé): 126: “Un epitaffio che si vede in Turino, mostratomi già dal Symeone”.
 23. G. Simeoni (1568), *Illustratione de gli epitaffi et medaglie antiche* (Lyon: Jean de Tournes): 9: “Questo epitaffio mi fece ricordare d'un altro simile, ma più ampio, et più bello, che ritornando di Piamonte io prestai già al Bagly di Montagna, che se ne servì poi nel suo libro della Religione antica de Romani, stampato in franzese a Lione da Guglielmo Rovilla, et da me tradotto in nostra lingua, il quale epitaffio come cosa mia et a proposito della mia materia io ho voluto di nuovo mettere qui di sotto”. The claim returns in G. Simeoni (1570), *Livre premier de Caesar renouvellé (...) avec le second de nouveau adiousté par Françoy de S. Thomas* (Lyon: Jean Saugrain): fols. 78^r–79^r.
 24. See the fervent praise of Du Choul, ibidem, fols. 73^r–73^v.
 25. Du Choul, *Discours sur la castrametation*, fol. 24^r: “Certainement c'est une chose tres necessaire pour maintenir une armee, un Royaume, et une Republique, que la religion en un exerceit: la quelle est cause de bon ordre; le bon ordre fait la bonne fortune; et de la bonne fortune succèdent les heureuses entreprises”.

26. Du Choul, *Discorso sopra la castrametatione*, 42: “Questa [la religione] è causa del buon ordine: et il buon ordine della buona fortuna, et dalla buona fortuna dipendono i felici successi delle imprese”.
27. Ibidem: “Certamente la religione è una cosa molto utile in uno essercito come una militia di soldati proprii è necessaria per guardare un reame, e una repubica”.
28. Simeoni, *Illustratione degli epitaffi*, 124–126, esp. on p. 125.
29. Renucci, *Un aventurier*, 6; S. Marconi (2000), “Giannotti, Donato” in: *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* (Rome: Istituto dell’Enciclopedia Italiana): Vol. LIV, 532.
30. Du Choul, *Discours de la castrametation*, fol. 24r: “Ce que nous cognossons par la tres noble sentence de Cicero, *De haruspicum responsis*, quand il nous dit que les Rommains, encores qu’ils ne fussent de nombre égaux aux Espaignols, de force aux Gaulois, d’astuce aux Africains, de science aux Grecs, d’esprit aux Latins, de piété, religion, et avecques la seule sagesse (par laquelle ils avoyent regardé que toutes choses estoient gouvernées par l’aide des Dieux immortels) avoyent vaincu toutes manieres de gens et estrangeres nations”.
31. Now Simeoni’s translation: “I Romani, benché non fossero di numero eguali a gli Spagnuoli, né di forze a i Franzesi, né d’astutia a gl’Africani, né di scienza a i Greci, né di spirito a i Latini, nondimeno per pietà, religione et singular sapienza ordinando tutte le loro cose sotto la fede et aiuto de gli Dii immortali, soggiogarono tutte le sorti de gli huomini et strane nationi” (Simeoni, *Discorso sopra la castrametatione*, 41).
32. Ibidem, 3: “La purità et dolcezza della lingua toscana pare che sia di presente (...) salita in tanto pregio, che doppo la greca et la latina i toscani medesimi studiandola, s’ingegnano ogni giorno di renderla più bella, i letterati stranieri l’ammirano et (come hanno fatto l’Ariosto, il Bembo et il Sennazzaro) nei loro scritti cercano d’imitarla”.
33. Du Choul, *Discorso della religione antica de Romani*, preface: “Cognoscere che la grandezza et prosperità dell’imperio romano non nacque d’altro che dalle virtù delle armi proprie, dalla giustitia e dal culto frequente (anchora che falso, altrettanto che il nostro ordinato dalla Chiesa cattolica, è salutifero et vero)”.
34. Ibidem, 263: “Apres avoir longuement discouru, ie me suis souventes-fois esbahi, comme les Gentils demeurerent si longuement en leur religion faulse, superstitieuse et controvée, laissants la nostre qui est vraye et venue de Dieu. (...) Aussi bien pouvoient croire les Romains, que IESUS CHRIST avoit resuscité les morts, comme leur Aesculapius, qu’ils firent monter au ciel tout foulstroyé, et de penser qu’il estoit né d’une vierge, comme ils cuyderent que Vesta estoit vierge et mere des Dieux.

- Et si estoient bien aveuglez de refuser de croire que nostre Seigneur
avoit rendue la veuë aux aveugles, veu qu'ils asseuroyent que Vespasian
l'Empereur avoit faict un tel miracle en Alexandrie”.
35. Cooper, “L'antiquaire”, 280, defines Du Choul “syncretiste”: a totally unbefitting characterisation.
 36. Du Choul, *Discours de la religion*, 312: “Et si nous regardons curieusement, nous congnoistrons que plusieurs institutions de nostre religion ont esté prises et translatées de ceremonies Aegyptiennes, et des Gentils: comme sont les tuniques et surpelis, les couronnes que font les prebstres, les inclinations de teste autour de l'autel, la pompe sacrificale, la musique des temples, adorations, prières et supplications, processions et letanies: et plusieurs autres choses, que noz prebstres usurpent en noz mystères, et referent à un seul Dieu, IESUS CHRIST, ce que l'ignorance des Gentils, faulse religion et folle superstition representoit à leurs Dieux, et aux hommes mortels après leurs consecrations”.
 37. Du Choul, *Discorso della religione antica de Romani*, 248: “Et molte altre cose, che un buono spirito potrà facilmente raccorre, havendo bene considerato queste ceremonie e quelle”.
 38. Ibidem: “Eccetto che quelle de gentili erano false et superstitiose, ma le nostre sono christiane et catholiche, essendo fatte in honore di Dio padre omnipotente, et di Giesu Christo suo figliuolo, a cui sia gloria eternalmente”.
 39. In this vein, one can read the beautiful essay by F. Saxl (1938–1939), “Pagan Sacrifice in the Italian Renaissance”, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 2, 346–367, where the author remarks: “The Stoicism of the Romans was an ideal held in such high esteem by the thinkers of the Renaissance that they could regard this sacrifice as a worthy parallel to the sacrifice of Christ, the central mystery of their church” (p. 351).
 40. A. van Gennep (1920), “Nouvelles recherches sur l'histoire en France de la méthode ethnographique: Claude Guichard, Richard Simon, Claude Fleury”, *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, 82: 139–162. And see also A. Momigliano (1969), “Prospettiva 1967 della storia greca” [1967], in his *Quarto contributo alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico* (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura): 43–58.
 41. A. Rossotto (1667), *Syllabus Scriptorum Pedemontii* (Mondovì: Francesco Maria Ghislandi): 160.
 42. C. Guichard (1581), *Funerailles et diverses manieres d'ensevelir des Rommains, Grecs et autres nations, tant anciens que modernes* (Lyon: Jean de Tournes): 1: “Et de vray, outre ce, qu'en ces trois consiste l'establissement, grandeur et assurance de toute republique bien

instituee, de la notice d'iceux depend encore l'entiere et parfaicte congnissance de l'histoire et antiquité des Rommains".

43. Ibidem, 12. On Lilio Giraldi, see G. Ricci (2007), *I giovani, i morti: Sfide al Rinascimento* (Bologna: Il Mulino): 139–160.
44. Guichard, *Funerailles*, 437: "Nous troverons toutes choses nouvelles, et qu'à l'aventure ne seront moins agreables pour leur nouveauté que les precedentes pour leur antiquité".
45. Ibidem, 438: "Ont surpassé toutes les autres nations quelles qu'elles soyent en sumptuosité de tombeaux et de sepulcres".
46. Ibidem, 463.
47. F. Lestringant (2002), "Anti-funérailles ou la guerre des cimetières (1594–1598)", in: J. Balsamo (ed.), *Les funérailles à la Renaissance: XIIe colloque international de la Société Française d'Etude du Seizième Siècle* (Geneva: Droz): 295–317.
48. Jean de Léry, *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil, otherwise called America*, trans. J. Whatley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990): 112.
49. Machiavelli, *The Chief Works*, Vol. I, 426.

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PART II

Religions and Empires

CHAPTER 5

Roman Prophet or Muslim Caesar: Muhammad the Lawgiver Before and After Machiavelli

Pier Mattia Tommasino

INTRODUCTION: MOMIGLIANO AND THE WISE MEN OF ANTIQUITY

In the spring of 1975 the Italian historian Arnaldo Momigliano published an article about the “wise-men civilisations” of antiquity, titled “Wisdom, Revelation and Doubt: Perspectives on the First Millennium B.C.” (later republished as “The Fault of the Greeks”).¹ In this article, Momigliano focuses on the wise men who emerged in different cultures between the eighth and the fifth century BCE: Confucius, Buddha, Zoroaster, Isaiah, Heraclitus and Aeschylus. It is a list that—as Momigliano observes—would have puzzled his grandfather and his generation, but made sense to him in the middle of the 1970s.

Momigliano highlights the deep change in historical perspective that allowed historians of his generation to face cultures which before seemed apart and to find something in common among them. At the same time,

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he asks himself why the civilisations of Persia and India, as well as those of Egypt and Babylon, did not actively participate in the formation of what he defines “our tradition” or “the civilisation of Europe”, based on an “old triangular culture” of “Jewish, Greek and Latin intellectual products”. According to Momigliano, this *collegium trilingue* (Greek-Latin-Hebrew) dates back to Mediterranean Hellenism and dominated the intellectual and academic life of Europe until the twentieth century. Momigliano also argues that among Greeks, Latins and Jews, the Greeks had more tools to know other cultures but they were the most reluctant to grasp them, especially the “authentic Iranian and Indian thought”. Their reluctance would be decisive for the development of European culture. For instance, the Greek tradition of the “seven wise men” insisted on practical and down-to-earth wisdom. Hence, Isaiah, Zoroaster and Buddha, “the prophetic men of the East”, did not have any chance to be part of the cohort of the seven wise men: this exclusion was the fault of the Greeks.

In this picture, Momigliano leaves no room to Celts, Germans and Arabs, as none of them “belongs to the privileged list of the original wise men civilisations”:

The Arabs in fact add to our difficulties. Being themselves the carrier of a prophetic civilisation – if ever there was one – and therefore uniquely close to Jews and Christians, they were a menace to the Christians, if not to the Jews. Serious contacts between Christian and Arab thought mainly occurred in those areas in which Arab thinkers worked with Greek concepts. We have managed to forget our precise debt to Celts, Germans and Arabs, so much so that neither Old Irish nor *Mittelhochdeutsch* nor Arabic has ever become a regular requirement in our educational establishments.²

The world has deeply changed since the middle of the 1970s. Nowadays, Islam is one of the dominant religions of Europe. Twenty millions of Muslims are living in Europe as European citizens, migrants and political refugees. Arabic has become one of the most studied languages in European and American academic institutions. During the last decades scholars of ancient history and Islamic studies have been profoundly reexamining the role of Islam in transforming the world since Late Antiquity, as well as research on early modern Europe has shown

to what extent the *collegium pentalingue* (Latin, Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Arabic and Chaldean), and not the *collegium trilingue* (Latin, Greek, Hebrew), was the ideal language requirement in the formation of the perfect scholar—and the perfect library—from early Humanism to late Antiquarianism.³ In this very regard, Momigliano's generational approach is an example for us today, and I wonder if the following pages on the image of the prophet Muḥammad as a wise man in the Italian Renaissance would have puzzled him as much as his list of ancient wise men would have disconcerted his grandfather.

This chapter focuses on the evolution of the image of the prophet Muḥammad as a wise man and lawgiver in late fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italy. Even if Machiavelli never refers directly to Muḥammad, the reception of his political writings in Venice in the 1530s and 1540s, along with the circulation of the new version of Averroës's *Destructio destructionum* (originally written in Arabic in 1179) and Pietro Pomponazzi's *De incantationibus* (1520) during the same decades, is a pivotal landmark in the early modern fashioning of Muḥammad as a successful ruler—or as an “armed prophet”, to borrow a famous image from Machiavelli—who used both religion and violence as political tools.

Furthermore, I will frame my hypothesis about the flourishing representation of Muhammad in Renaissance Europe within the debate about the rise of Islam as part of a long Late Antiquity and not as the end of it, recently reignited after the publication of *Before and After Muhammad* by Garth Fowden.⁴ To do so, I chose Venice as a case study. Venetian municipal and universal historians analysed the rise of Islam in relation to the foundation and early development of their city, while extensively discussing the reasons of the Ottoman military supremacy in the early modern Mediterranean. This Venetian focus allows me to argue that some scholars of the Renaissance considered Islam as one of the essential elements of Late Antiquity, as well as of their contemporary Eurasian world.

MUHAMMAD, ZOROASTER AND BUDDHA

The choice of sources deeply influenced the periodisation in the history of the European representations of Muḥammad. Since the beginning of Islam, Christian polemicists considered Muḥammad as a pseudo-prophet,

precisely because of his use of violence and forgery. According to the Gospel of Matthew (24:24) and the Book of Revelation (19:20), pseudo-Christians and pseudo-prophets act through fake miracles and tricks: *signa* (signs) and *prodigia* (wonders). But if Christ's prophethood was confirmed by his miracles—they argued—, Muḥammad was not a prophet, since he did not work any true miracle and, even worse, he pretended to have been able to do it. As many others, he was a simulator. During the Middle Ages the fake miracles of Muḥammad, especially the ones related to nature and animals (the dove whispering in his ears, the bull holding the Qur'ān between the horns, the ascension of Muḥammad to Heaven, etc.) circulated throughout Europe across languages and literary genres creating what was later called the western legend of Muḥammad: the legend of his religious simulation.

An early example of this polemical argument can be found in the letters of al-Ḥāshimī and al-Kindī written in Baghdad in the ninth century. These letters were the best-known Arabic apology of Christianity against Islam circulating in Eurasia and north Africa during the Middle Ages. Their Arabic version was known in Iberia during the tenth and the eleventh century. But especially since their translation into Latin, realised in twelfth-century Spain, European readers have been exposed to a broad comparative history of pseudo-prophecy and religious forgery. The author, a Christian Arab identified in the text as 'Abd al-Masīḥ al-Kindī, enriches his description of the vicious life and the astonishingly fast career of the pseudo-prophet Muḥammad comparing him with Zoroaster and Buddha. The Christian al-Kindī wrote to the Muslim al-Ḥāshimī as follows:

Since the ancient times there were many heretics, but none of them used violence and coercion in the formation of his own community of believers. Of course, they used deception. One of them, a Greek called Daradast [Zoroaster] said that he had a vision on the mountain of Sīlān. He convinced King Zebeizib [Vištaspa] and its entourage to convert to his faith; he seduced them performing false miracles and magic tricks: he pretended that he made a horse die in order to resuscitate it right after. He also feigned to have worked another miracle. (...) Helbidius from India [Buddha] did not behave differently. He seduced many people – al-Kindī continues – showing them a big bird flying close to the sunset. This bird had a girl inside its venter, who screaming at everybody declared: “Know that Helbidius’ prophecies are truthful”. These are the tricks and the forgeries of pseudo-prophets, who assumed to be real prophets.⁵

According to al-Kindī, Muḥammad was a pseudo-prophet just like the ancient pseudo-prophets of Persia and India. Originating among Arab Christians in Baghdad, the comparison between Muḥammad, Zoroaster and Buddha is particularly interesting for us beyond its polemical purposes. Usually attributed to the later tradition of the three impostors and to the philosophers of the Enlightenment, it already circulated in Latin throughout Europe during the Middle Ages and the early modern period. This juxtaposition of pseudo-prophets suggests that we must analyse the history of the representation of Muḥammad, even in pre-modern Europe, within “a global framework of inquiry”, as has been proposed by Christiane Gruber and Avinoam Shalem.⁶ Furthermore, it sends us back to Momigliano’s statement that the Arabs “do not belong to the privileged list of the original wise-men civilisation”.⁷ Above all, we shall understand when, why and how European scholars began perceiving the pseudo-prophet Muḥammad as a successful ruler, that is, as a lawgiver and a wise man, and when and within which intellectual frame his religious simulation shifted from being considered a sign of felony to being analysed as an effective strategy of ruling.

In the last decade, extensive research has been carried out on polemical literature about Muḥammad produced in medieval Europe both in Latin and in vernaculars. Editions of sources, conferences, collected volumes, repertories and companions have mapped the uses of Muḥammad’s biography throughout Europe, with a particular focus on medieval Iberia and continental Europe.⁸ On the contrary, late medieval and early modern historiographical sources have been much less investigated. This lack of research depends on the assumption of a continuity in the medieval and early modern perceptions of Muḥammad across Europe or, perhaps, the little attention devoted to later texts led scholars to accept this continuity of perceptions. Although the representation of proto-Islamic societies and the contemporary Ottoman world were, of course, deeply connected, scholars of early modern Europe focus mostly on the representation of the Ottomans and their rulers instead of analysing biographies of Muḥammad.⁹ Thus, I propose to explore how Muḥammad’s life was interpreted by fifteenth-century historians, rewritten before and after the diffusion of Machiavelli’s *Prince* and *Discourses on Livy* (composed between 1513 and 1519 and both printed posthumously in 1532 and 1531, respectively), and finally received by Italian scholars of the seventeenth century. This shift of focus from religious polemic to humanistic historiography, and particularly to universal

history, is methodologically necessary in order to challenge the dominant periodisation of the history of the representation of Muhammad in Europe.

For instance, according to John Tolan, one of the leading historian of the Christian-Islamic relations in pre-modern Europe, the polemical images forged by Christian polemicists during the Middle Ages “proved tenacious” and “they provide the dominant European discourse on the Prophet through the seventeenth century”.¹⁰ In his several articles on this subject, Tolan left no room for humanistic historiography. Very recently, for example, supposing a linear continuity from late medieval historians to Martin Luther, he has essentially skipped the role of Islam and Islamicate societies in fifteenth-century Italian universal history and political theory, in part already analysed by Margaret Meserve.¹¹ According to this narrative, the place of Islam and its prophet as a lawgiver and a wise man was considered only in the seventeenth- and especially in the eighteenth-century northern European historiography and political thought. In this perspective the discovery of the New World, the new philology and the multiconfessionalism of northern Europe paved the way to the religious relativism and skepticism of the Enlightenment: the time was ripe for considering Muhammad a lawgiver and an armed prophet—“with the sword in one hand and the Koran in the other”, as Edward Gibbon presented him in the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.¹²

Perhaps this narrative also overshadows the complex relation between *religio* and *lex* during the Middle Ages, and does not consider the discussion about Muhammad as prophet and lawgiver in Muslim thinkers, who were well known in Europe, such as al-Fārābī or Averroës, as well as in the Arabic, Hebrew and Latin Averroistic tradition that reached the school of Pietro Pomponazzi and his followers. According to the medieval Augustinian theologian Gilles of Rome, Averroës affirmed that “no religion is true, though it may at best be useful”.¹³ Keeping in mind that this philosophical tradition had a strong influence on Italian scholars, I propose a displacement of focus. We shall challenge the alleged continuity of the image of Muhammad forged by medieval polemicists and explore instead the underestimated discontinuity of its early modern reception.

Of course, I am not interested in revindicating the role of Italian humanists in a teleological history of the secularisation of European or western societies. My concerns are neither nationalistic, nor disciplinary. And, after all, the recent decades have shown us to what extent

the relation between “secularisation” and “modernity” is controversial.¹⁴ However, I do think that questioning this widespread narrative is necessary for several reasons. Firstly, since the 1990s the role of Italian pre-modern intellectuals, gathered together under the questionable label of “Humanism”, has been underestimated in the history of the European knowledge of Islamic societies if compared to the abundant research dedicated to the history of Oriental studies in early modern Britain, France or the Netherlands. Secondly, during the same period, scholars of the European and Mediterranean Middle Ages driven by post-colonial theories and subaltern studies, overestimated the agency of Italian humanists, and primarily of Petrarch, in the creation of an early Eurocentric version of Saidian Orientalism.¹⁵ Both approaches, although based on sharply diverging conceptions of the intellectual history of Europe, marginalise and misrepresent the complexity and variety of historiographical and political perspectives about Islam, its prophet and Islamicate societies, debated in fifteenth-century Italy. In this regard, Américo Castro’s pages on the recontextualisation of the figure of Saladin and the tale of the three rings across Iberia, Italy and France, despite their nationalistic approach (Spanish reception, Italian reception, etc.), reveal an unquestionable awareness of the complex history of its reception across genres and overlapping intellectual traditions.¹⁶

THE ORIGINS OF VENICE

Bernardo Giustinian was a Venetian nobleman, diplomat and historian who was born in 1408 and died in 1489. His most famous work, *De origine urbis Venetiarum*, divided in 15 books, was published posthumously in early 1493 (*more veneto* 1492). According to Giustinian and other contemporary historians, the municipal history of Venice and the universal history of Eurasia were inseparably intertwined.¹⁷ As we read on the title-page, this work contains not only the deeds of the Venetians, but also the wars of the Goths (Books IV to VI), the Lombards (Book VII), the Saracens and the Turks (Books VIII and XI). These were the powers that the Republic of Venice faced during the first centuries of its glorious history. Among them, Islam was particularly interesting because no religious sect or great empire spread so fast and so broadly before, “a thing which is indeed especially remarkable” to Giustinian and consequently worthy to be analysed.¹⁸

Book VIII is devoted to the rise of Islam in its Eurasian context. Giustinian highlights that the Arab conquests of north Africa and western Asia had a huge impact on the Italian peninsula. Giustinian approaches the rise of Islam through both political history and proto-ethnography: he is interested in the military history of early Islam as well as in the nature and customs of the Arabs. Moreover, he often reveals his sources. At the beginning of Book VIII, he admits that he did not find sufficient information about the origin of “the sect of the Saracens”. He states that “among our books, however, there are later commentaries written by scholars devoted to sacred books. But—he continues—they wrote them with the aim of refuting their errors and not in order to write history”. Giustinian intentionally “decided not to follow these writings”: he puts religious polemic aside and uses Strabo and Solinus for the nature and the customs of the Arabs, and Paul the Deacon for the later conflicts of Venetians against both Saracens and Lombards.¹⁹

Giustinian too, however, has to rely on medieval polemical sources. But he twists and reframes them. He uses the western legend of Muḥammad, but he rewrites the latter’s military achievements highlighting “the art” and the political “talent” of the prophet instead of listing dozens of absurd “fables” as evidence of his pseudo-prophetical nature. Giustinian’s aim was not to unveil the fakeness of Muḥammad’s miracles, or their exotic and imaginative power. Evidently, Giustinian was neither a religious polemicist nor a story-teller. He does not interpret Muḥammad’s fables, his miracles and wonders just as falsity or fiction, but as a waste of time: “we could not even tell them to children and old women”—he continues—“so, I did not report them because they are a waste of time. But if someone wants to read them, then he should read the Qur’ān”.²⁰

Giustinian essentially focuses on Muhammad’s “arts” and “methods” of acquiring and maintaining the power. He discusses the effectiveness of Muhammad’s political and military strategies, not the truthfulness of his prophecy. Thus, he considers Muḥammad’s deeds mainly from a political and military point of view. According to Giustinian, among Muḥammad’s political “arts” the use of religion was definitely the most effective. A skilled humanist, Giustinian enriches his text by inserting short and elegant orations. He vehiculates his thoughts on the political use of religion through the speech that the almost legendary Christian monk Sergius, banned from Constantinople as a heretic by Emperor Heraclius, addressed to the prophet Muḥammad. Sergius tried to

convince the emerging leader of the Arabs to dethrone Heraclius and take power over a decaying Roman Empire. In his oration, Sergius suggests to Muḥammad not to disdain a pragmatic use of religion: “you must blend some of religion” with other tools, and “you must receive your authority from heaven”—Sergius tells Muḥammad—such as “many princes already have done”, because “people are moved especially by religion”.²¹

During the last decades of the fifteenth-century, Bernardo Giustinian was not isolated. His version of Muḥammad’s biography is an example of the complex ongoing process that will converge into Machiavelli’s codification of the “armed prophet” and the political use of simulated religion. Carlo Ginzburg has reminded us that already before the diffusion of Machiavelli’s *Prince* and the *Discourses*, the Florentine Bartolomeo Scala in his dialogue *De legibus et iudiciis* (1483) juxtaposed the prophet Muḥammad with the Roman king Numa Pompilius. The southern Italian humanist Antonio De Ferraris, better known as Galateo, did the same in his sermon in vernacular on the Lord’s prayer *Esposizione del Pater Noster* (approx. 1506–1508).²²

MUḤAMMAD AMONG THE CAESARS

In Giustinian’s *De origine urbis Venetiarum* Muḥammad is more often equated to princes than to heretics or heresiarchs. But in medieval chronicles, and more frequently during the fifteenth century, such a political approach was increasingly applied to Muḥammad himself, especially in books of history.

The biography of the prophet moved from religious polemic and the paratext of Qur’anic translations, to chronicles, universal histories and, then, to the lives of illustrious military captains. Frequently, Muḥammad left the company of hideous heresiarchs and beastly pseudo-prophets to join Roman generals and Ottoman rulers. Many factors contributed to this displacement. The discussion on the nature of prophets in the Arabic, Hebrew and Latin Averroism, as well as the affirmation of the biography of great men (*viri illustres*) as a new dominant historiographical genre, which included Arab philosophers and physicians, were fundamental elements of this process.²³ Also, the debate about the nobility of the human being helped scholars look at non-Christian wise men. Galateo himself, for example, in his late fifteenth-century letter on nobility, addressed to Marco Antonio Tolomei, bishop of Lecce from 1485

to 1498, stated that “among the Arabs in the generations nearest our own, many who are excellent have flourished in the study of wisdom”.²⁴ Some decades earlier, even the Spanish cardinal and polemicist Juan de Torquemada admitted that among the “Moors” there were many “kings, princes and great men”.²⁵

The rise of the Ottoman Empire certainly influenced the refashioning of Muḥammad’s biography in Europe. Especially after the conquest of Constantinople (1453), Muḥammad found his place in the galleries of ancient and contemporary Eurasian emperors, mainly introducing the genealogical series of Ottoman rulers—for instance, a life of Muḥammad was included in the *Enneades*, written between 1498 and 1504 by Marco Antonio Sabelllico, as well as in the *Vitae Caesarum* by the historian Bernardino Corio from Milan, published in 1503, and among the biographies published in the *De Caesaribus* by the Venetian Giovanni Battista Egnazio in 1516.²⁶ The life of Muḥammad also entered the best libraries of fifteenth-century Italy. A version inscribed on papyrus appears in the inventory of the books of King Ferdinand I of Naples (1481).²⁷ According to Giovanni Marco Cinico of Parma, the most active copyist of his library, Ferdinand I recognised the importance of the *collegium pentalingue* and desired to know the contents of all the books written in “Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Arabic, Chaldean and in all other languages”.²⁸

During the late fifteenth and the early sixteenth century Muḥammad was moved among the Caesars. Of course, this “Caesarisation” of the prophet should not be described as a linear process nor as unrelated to religious polemic. Fifteenth-century historians kept using religious polemics, but in order to describe Muḥammad as a military captain, and as the Arab forerunner of the Ottoman emperors. We already know that this endless rewriting of the same stories and exotic wonders led scholars to underline the continuity of Muḥammad’s portrait in different genres and across time, instead of unraveling its discontinuities. But reading the stories of Muḥammad’s miracles within a collection of military captains of the world or within a Herodotean investigation about the peoples of Late Antiquity, is not the same that finding them in a polemical treatise against Islam. The genre itself legitimises Muḥammad as a political and military leader. Periodisation, in fact, is not the only issue that is at stake. Indeed, the displacement of biographical materials from a genre (religious polemic) to another (historiography) had its consequences. Even when Muḥammad was portrayed as an anti-Caesar, the references to Greek and especially Roman antiquity, and the context of publishing itself, made

him gradually lose his alleged savagery (*immanitas*), and his unreliability as a prophet, to gain instead some political and military legitimacy.

READING VALERIUS MAXIMUS IN THE RENAISSANCE

Many other examples could be brought forward. But a very important one, especially in relation to Machiavelli's own work—as we will see later—is the life of Muḥammad included in *De Turcorum origine* by the Austrian humanist Johannes Cuspinian, published in 1541 and later republished in the second edition of his *De Caesaribus*. Eric Cochrane already demonstrated that Cuspinian rewrote Venetian sources, essentially the lives of the emperors anthologised by the Venetian Giovanni Battista Egnazio.²⁹ As the Venetian Egnazio does in his own *De Caesaribus*, published in 1516, Cuspinian introduces the life of Ottoman kings and emperors with the biography of Muḥammad. Since the section's title, “*De Mahomete Saracenorum phylarco et pseudopropheta*”, Muḥammad is identified firstly as a *phylarco*, that is an “Arab chief, vassal of the Byzantine Empire”, and only later as a pseudo-prophet.³⁰

This continuous process of transmission and recontextualisation of Muḥammad's life added a new Roman flavour to old materials: Muḥammad became “a new man (*homo novus*)”, strong as a gladiator, and brave enough to attack the Byzantine army “in the open field (*aperto Marte*)”. The Roman histories, partially filtered through Sabellico and the Augustinian historian Andrea Biglia, author of *De detrimento fidei Orientis* (1433), were the new secret ingredient of this biography. Moreover, Cuspinian enriches Egnazio's abridged life of Muḥammad by using another source that Cochrane did not identify: the epistle that the humanist Francesco Filelfo wrote in 1451 to King Charles VII of France to persuade him to attack the Ottomans.³¹

Filelfo, as usual, presents Muḥammad's forgeries using the so-called western medieval legend of Muḥammad: essentially the stories of the bull offering him the Qur'ān, and of the dove whispering in his ears. According to this tale, Muḥammad trained a dove pick a grain from his ear, suggesting that the dove—that he called the Holy Spirit—came whispering the divine word to him. Many traditions identify animals as mediators between the human and the supernatural world, and consequently the intimacy with them as a sign of prophecy. We actually read similar stories in al-Kindī's passage on Zoroaster and Buddha. Writing in the ninth century the Arab Christian al-Kindī highlights the

untruthfulness of Muhammad's prophecy comparing the pseudo-prophet of Late Antiquity to the ancient pseudo-prophets of Persia and India. But Cuspinian describes Muhammad's religious simulation through a very different lens.

Rewriting Filelfo's version of the tale of the dove, Cuspinian adds that Muhammad "learned this trickery (*dolus*) from the Roman general Quintus Sertorius who trained a hind in order to convince his soldiers of his power".³² Muhammad's intimacy with the dove, juxtaposed to Sertorius's acquaintance with the hind, takes on a very new significance.³³ The polemical image of the prophet as a worker of bogus miracles continued to play an important role in European discourse about Islam until the end of the sixteenth century and even later, but it also acquired, depending of the context, a very different meaning. Here Muhammad's simulation (*simulatio*) is no longer the sign of his pseudo-prophecy but of his successful political and military strategy, legitimised by what "Roman histories tell us".³⁴

But which Roman history did Cuspinian read in order to compare Muhammad with Quintus Sertorius? This is an important question because the answer sheds light on Machiavelli's own use of Roman historiography. Recently, Carlo Ginzburg has recalled the importance that Roman historians, especially Valerius Maximus, had on the formation of Machiavelli's thought.³⁵ Ginzburg particularly laments that scholars overlooked the influence of the *Facta and Dicta Memorabilia* by Valerius Maximus (first century CE) on the formation of Machiavelli's thought about religion. Ginzburg recognises that Leslie J. Walker proposed Valerius Maximus as one of Machiavelli's sources in his edition of the *Discourses* (1975). But he also pinpoints that the early modern editions of Valerius Maximus identified by Walker as the possible direct sources of Machiavelli (Strasbourg 1470, Venice 1471 and Venice 1502) lacked a very important section of the text: the Chapter 2 of Book I, titled "De simulata religione".³⁶

This section of Valerius Maximus's book, which includes the examples of Numa Pompilius speaking with the nymph Egeria and of Quintus Sertorius taming a hind, was actually found and considered authentic by Johannes Cuspinian himself at the beginning of the sixteenth century. It was published by Aldus Manutius in his edition of Valerius Maximus' work in 1503, which also includes a letter of thanks by Manutius to Cuspinian. In Chapter 6 of *The Prince*, Machiavelli lists Moses, Cyrus, Theseus and Romulus as the ancient armed prophets that used both armies and religion to acquire and maintain the power.³⁷ Later, in Chapter 11 of Book I of

the *Discourses on Livy*, he uses the example of King Numa Pompilius, most likely quoted from the newly discovered excerpt “De simulata religione” by Valerius Maximus. In this chapter of the *Discourses*, Numa is even more successful than Romulus, because he “turned to religion as something altogether necessary if he wished to maintain a well-ordered state” and “pretended (*simulò*) he was intimate with a nymph who advised him about which he was going to advise the people”.³⁸ On the contrary, in the dialogue *The Art of War*, written in 1519–1520 and published in 1521, Machiavelli uses the example of the Roman general Quintus Sertorius, that he possibly read in the passage rediscovered by Cuspinian. In the Book IV of the dialogue, Fabrizio Colonna states:

Also very powerful in keeping the ancient soldiers well disposed were religion and the oath sworn when they were taken into service, because in all their transgressions they were threatened not alone with the ills they could fear from men but with those they could expect from God. This condition, mixed (*mescolata*) with other religious customs,³⁹ many times made every sort of undertaking easy for the ancient generals, and always will make them so, where religion is feared and observed. Sertorius availed himself of this, pretending that he spoke with a deer which, on the part of God, promised him victory.⁴⁰

Ginzburg suggests that Machiavelli read the stories of Numa and Sertorius in the new excerpt by Valerius Maximus thanks to Cuspinian. I add that some years later Cuspinian himself, thanks to his own discovery, compared Muḥammad with Quintus Sertorius in his version of Muḥammad’s life, later published in *De Turcorum origine* (1541) and then in the second edition of *De Caesaribus* (1561). This example shows that the rediscovery of the classical past goes along with the rewriting of the history of Late Antiquity, as well as the Caesarianisation of the prophet Muḥammad, belongs to a broader debate about the relation between religion and power. At the turn of the sixteenth century, especially within books of history, Muḥammad, the new prince of Late Antiquity, found his place among the ancient wise men.

MUHAMMAD THE LAWGIVER AFTER MACHIAVELLI

The circulation of Machiavelli’s works during the 1530s and the 1540s deeply influenced the refashioning of the image of Muḥammad in early modern Europe. For instance, the comparison between Muḥammad

and Numa Pompilius, that we already found in Bartolomeo Scala and Galateo, became commonplace among Italian political thinkers after the diffusion of the *Discourses on Livy*. The Jesuit Antonio Possevino as well as the Italian philosopher Tommaso Campanella used this comparison for their own political purposes in the second half of the sixteenth century.⁴¹ But it is a particular example, taken from the 1540s, that sheds light on the mark that Machiavelli's ideas on religion and his new political vocabulary left on the history of the representation of Muhammad in Europe.

Let us stay in Venice together with Sabelllico, Egnazio and Giustinian. Egnazio's *De Caesaribus* was translated into Italian in 1540. Giustinian's *De origine urbis Venetiarum* was reprinted in 1534, and eventually translated into Italian by Ludovico Domenichi in 1545.⁴² Two years after Domenichi's translation, Giovanni Battista Castrodardo from Belluno, a translator of histories and commentator on Dante's *Comedy*, wrote a new life of Muhammad in his long introduction to the *Alcorano di Macometto*.⁴³ This text was published by Andrea Arrivabene in Venice in 1547. Arrivabene dedicated the book to Gabriel de Luetz, baron of Aramon, the fourth French ambassador to the Ottoman Empire (1547–1553). Both the ambassador and the publisher were closely linked with Venetian evangelical circles and Italian reformers, looking with hope at the Ottoman–French alliance during the Shmalkadic war (1546–1547).

The *Alcorano di Macometto* was composed as a handy companion to Islam, more accessible to a large readership. It was written in Italian and printed in a small and cheap format (*quarto*). Arrivabene issued a volume aimed at furnishing Italian and Italophone readership with information about Islamic history and Islam as the dominant religion of the Ottoman Empire. The first but not the sole intended audience of this companion were the political and religious refugees linked with the French embassies both in Venice and Istanbul, who travelled from Venice to the Bosphorus during the late 1540s and the beginning of the 1550s. Among them were anti-Medicean and anti-imperial political refugees, European and Italian anti-Trinitarians, merchants and gentlemen from Ferrara, evangelical preachers living in Galata and Pera, as well as Spanish and Portuguese Jews. For example, a letter from the Hungarian reformer Zsigmond Gyalui Torda to the German Philip Melanchthon, dated December 1545, provides evidence that the ambassador d'Aramon accommodated evangelical preachers in his house in Pera:

In Turkey itself many people proclaim Christ. There were Franciscus Picus and the Hungarian Zegedinus [Stephen Kis of Szeged]. The latter teaches a large audience, both in Galata and in Istanbul. He is taken care of by the French ambassador and by other Christians who work and trade here.⁴⁴

Among the merchants linked to d'Aramon and Arrivabene there were also Jews from the Iberian Peninsula. Both Arrivabene and d'Aramon had relations with people of the House of Nasi. Beatriz de Luna, alias Gracia Nasi Mendes, and her nephew João Miquez, alias Joseph Nasi, were among those supported by the French embassies both in Rome and on the Bosphorus as they settled in Istanbul in the 1550s.⁴⁵

Although the *Alcorano di Macometto* contains many polemical marginal notes, its originality relies on the anti-Habsburg and pro-Ottoman political propaganda hidden in the text, especially in its long introduction. In this section of the book, Castrodardo combines different materials, both contemporary and medieval, taken from the flourishing market of proto-ethnographical texts on Turkish religion and customs (*turcica*), as well as from the less explored but rich literature on and against Islam produced in early modern Iberia (*hispano-arabica*). A translator of histories, Castrodardo also uses humanistic historiography and coincidentally the life of Muhammad rewritten by Giustinian in *De origine urbis Venetiarum* and newly translated into Italian by Domenichi in 1545.

Comparing the two texts allows us to understand how Castrodardo reshapes Giustinian's biography of Muhammad and especially the oration that the monk Sergius addressed him in order to convince him to dethrone Emperor Heraclius. First of all, Castrodardo uses Domenichi's Italian translation. Second, he transforms the brief speech of the monk Sergius, reported essentially in indirect speech by Giustinian, into a very long and rich oration. Moreover, this young polymath from Belluno—a city of the Venetian Terraferma—who studied in Padua in early 1540, was writing in the second half the 1540s, not in the 1480s. Thus, Giustinian's oration on Muhammad's successful strategy of ruling is reformulated through Castrodardo's readings of Machiavelli, as well as by Arrivabene's pro-French and pro-Ottoman agenda.

Many examples could be brought forward. Castrodardo, in fact, refashioned the image of Muhammad according to Machiavelli's political terminology. In the new version of the speech, Sergius suggests Muhammad to use his virtue (*virtù*), that is, his skill to understand when

to take advantage of the opportunities (*occasioni*) that the fortune (*fortuna*) offered him. Castrodardo uses many of Machiavelli's political terms, such as *modi*—the “ways” and “methods” to acquire and maintain the power—, while Giustinian and Domenichi uses the term “art” (*ars*) that is the Latin translation of the Aristotelian *téchne*.⁴⁶ Again, the same political use of religion as in Giustinian's text is at the core of Castrodardo's version of Sergius's speech. But here what Giustinian identifies with Latin *religio* explicitly becomes the Italian *simulata religione*, following Chapter 6 of Machiavelli's *Prince*. Thus the *Alcorano di Macometto* presents Muḥammad as an “armed prophet” and his use of “simulated religion” as a political strategy. At the end of his speech, Sergius suggests Muḥammad to follow the men “who gave new laws (*nuove leggi*) to their people”. Especially, Muḥammad should take in mind the example of the “ancient heroes, kings and legislators” who “did the same since the beginning of time, because there is no better way of ruling that the fear and the reverence of simulated religion”.⁴⁷

Giustinian was interested in understanding the Eurasian political context of the origin of the city of Venice. Conversely, Castrodardo focused on the present. In 1547, in a book dedicated to a French ambassador who had a leading role in the Franco-Ottoman collaboration of the 1540s, the prophet Muḥammad, who should have followed the example of the “ancient heroes, kings and legislators”, works as an early Islamic or late-antique mask for a contemporary ruler: the Ottoman Sultan Süleymān, (r. 1520–1566).

Only in Castrodardo's version of Sergius's speech, Muhammad/Süleymān is described as the “safe harbour” and “the perfect asylum”, as well as the “refuge for all the people oppressed in the world”.⁴⁸ The last expression clearly reminds us one of the honorific titles of Sultan Süleymān, “the Refuge of the World” (*Alem Penah*), sometimes formulated as “the Refuge of all the People in the whole World”. As Giancarlo Casale has recently pointed out, this title is used in an Ottoman map produced in Venice for the Ottoman market in 1559.⁴⁹

ITALIAN PRO-OTTOMAN PROPAGANDA

The *Alcorano di Macometto* should be read within the flourishing and still little-known production of Venetian and Italian pro-Ottoman texts. This literature reemerged every so often depending on the official

diplomatic agenda of the Republic of Venice, as well as on the political wishes of Italian religious nonconformists, anti-imperial refugees and pro-French intellectuals living in the city.

Castrodardo's romanised Muhammad has more in common with Numa Pompilius than with the Antichrist, and reminds us the romanisation of Turkish rulers in Ottoman imperial propaganda. For instance, in 1532, during Süleymān's third military campaign in Hungary, just after Charles V was crowned emperor in Bologna (1530), some Venetians addressed Sultan Süleymān as the emperor of the world. An anonymous illuminated manuscript, held at the Houghton Library in Cambridge (Massachusetts) and produced in the early 1530s along with a helmet made by Venetian jewellers as the "ornament" of Süleymān "divine Caesarship", preserves a panegyric in honor of the Ottoman sovereign.⁵⁰ In this text the anonymous author recognises that Süleymān's "empire has surpassed in grandeur and longevity all other empires that have ever existed in the world", and wishes in Italian for him to "live and conquer more than Augustus, better than Trajan, more fortunate than Alexander the Great, with prosperity of body, contentment of soul, and victory in wars, so that the world can benefit from you longer, and after your death you will be placed among the number of gods".⁵¹

The comparisons and especially the wish for the divinisation of the sultan of the Ottomans and the caliph of all believers reminds us of the imperial cult of Augustus more than that of a Muslim practice. Venetians produced pro-Ottoman literature along the 1530s and 1540s mirroring and possibly being influenced by the ideological program of *translatio imperii* that Ibrahim Pasha sponsored when he was grand vizier of the Ottoman Empire (1523–1536). For instance, a long epic poem in octaves, held in the Municipal Library of Treviso and written in Italian in the 1520s or 1530s, celebrates the conquest of Egypt by Sultan Selīm I (1517).⁵² According to the hyperbolic praises of the poem, Selīm I (r. 1512–1520) had more soldiers under his command than Scipio and Hannibal, and achieved more victories than Caesar. Also, thanks to his son Süleymān, the Golden Age and Astraea herself will return on Earth:

He will bring back the Golden Age, /he will be the patron of poets, /
he will make the sacred laurel blossom again, /he will make everyone living
in peace, /he will be the light of the chorus of Pegasus, /he will make
the lions meek, /he will tame the dragons, the bears and the snakes, /the
birds, the fish and the people on earth.⁵³

The *Alcorano di Macometto* published in Venice in 1547 should be read within the frame of Italian pro-Ottoman literature. We briefly read across three examples, dated 1530s, 1532 and 1547, suggesting that the Italian romanisation of Ottoman rulers mirrors the Ottoman use of the Roman imperial past. We must add that the romanisation of the Ottoman rulers dialogues with the Caesarianisation of the prophet Muḥammad himself, a process that started decades earlier and penetrated both Italian historiography and political theory.

In Istanbul the assimilation of the Roman imperial past served to legitimise the Ottoman imperial present. In Italy Roman rulers, both mythical and historical, served as filters to legitimise Muslim rulers as rulers and Muḥammad as the lawgiver and the wise man of Late Antiquity. In this regard, Venice represents an excellent case study, because the city developed along with the diffusion of Islam and its commercial fortunes were deeply intertwined with the Ottoman empire.

CONCLUSION: READING THE *ALCORANO DI MACOMETTO* IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY FLORENCE

In the second half of the seventeenth century the physician Francesco Redi asked one of his friends in Florence to read the *Alcorano di Macometto* for him. As Ann Blair has recently shown, “reading for others” was a common practice among early modern intellectuals.⁵⁴ This unknown reader wrote a report of his reading for his friend that is still preserved among Redi’s papers held in the Biblioteca Nazionale of Florence.⁵⁵ The reader found the *Alcorano di Macometto* very useful as a manual for political leaders and rulers, in which a select audience of politicians could learn the secrets of ruling (*arcana imperii*) of the prophet Muḥammad.

The reader was perfectly aware of the different levels of reading of Arrivabene’s companion to Islam and especially of Castrodardo’s version of the biography of Muḥammad. He reads between the lines of the text and beyond the polemical marginal paratext. Actually, he explicitly recognises that the marginal notes seem more “Christian” and “devotional” than “political”. This sophisticated reader was comfortable with leaving the “fake miracles” to the broader public and to recognise instead Muḥammad’s “art” of ruling and the secrets of his political power. “The stories narrated in the first book”—the reader writes—are “certainly

fanciful”, but he also added “that we could say the same for the stories of Romulus, Numa Pompilius and of other lawgivers”.⁵⁶

In the second half of the seventeenth-century, this reader grasped the ambivalence of the *Alcorano di Macometto* and, more broadly, of the biographies of Muslim and non-Christian rulers as a genre. The reader went through the surface of the text and reached its political meaning. Following the tradition that we have illustrated, the reader interpreted the figure of Muḥammad as the example of ruler, no matter the religion he professed. In his private report for his friend, in fact, the reader states that “at first glance Muḥammad appeared as a pseudo-prophet”. But, then, after a closer look, Muḥammad “seemed to be the same as other pagan lawgivers, or probably even the best one, because he found the best law to rule a great monarchy”.⁵⁷ He questions the text, finding the genealogy of Muḥammad written by “our historians who dealt with the Turks” more reliable. Moreover, the reader adds that the *Alcorano di Macometto* could be “dangerous for the broad public” because of its “fables”, but at the same time it is a useful text “for wise and prudent politicians”. In this regard, the reader agrees with the church of Rome that prohibited the diffusion of the text in 1564, but at the same time recognised Muḥammad as a model of ruler who introduced “new laws”.⁵⁸

This twofold interpretation of the *Alcorano di Macometto* confirms the diffusion of the image of the prophet Muḥammad as a lawgiver in seventeenth-century Italy. Florence, by the way, was the city of Machiavelli, but also the place where Antonio Magliabechi would discuss the nature and diffusion of the treatise *De tribus impostoribus* in the 1690s.⁵⁹ This reading shows that elites and political theorists were able to read between the lines and beyond the surface of the text. A strategy of reading that, as scholars of the early modern period, we should always take into consideration. Moreover, this reading of the *Alcorano* suggests that the lines of transmission of the image of Muḥammad in Europe were complex and overlapping. A late seventeenth-century reader, based in Tuscany and most likely receptive of the new trends of European libertinism, was able to find it in Castrodardo’s sixteenth-century companion to Islam (1547). Thanks to his reading of Machiavelli, Castrodardo reformulated Sergius’s oration to Muḥammad written by Giustinian, who in turn defended his use of historiographical instead of polemical sources. These are just a few examples of the early modern tradition within which Muḥammad the pseudo-prophet became the prince of Late Antiquity and the Arab wiseman of Eurasia.

NOTES

1. A. Momigliano (1975), “Wisdom, Revelation and Doubt: Perspective on the First Millennium B.C.”, *Daedalus*, 104, 9–19, reprinted as “The Fault of the Greeks”, in: A. Momigliano (2012), *Essays in Ancient and Modern Historiography*, with a new foreword by A. Grafton (Chicago: Chicago University Press): 9–23. I quote from the reprint.
2. *Ibidem*, 11.
3. P.M. Tommasino (2013), *L’Alcorano di Macometto: Storia di un libro del Cinquecento europeo* (Bologna: Il Mulino): 32–33. See also A.M. Piemontese (2002), “Lo studio delle cinque lingue presso Savonarola e Pico”, in: M. Bernardini (ed.), *Europa e Islam tra i secoli XIV e XVI*, 2 vols. (Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale): Vol. I, 179–202.
4. G. Fowden (2014), *Before and After Muhammad: The First Millennium Refocused* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press).
5. L. Bottini (2009–2015), “The Apology of Al-Kindī”, in: D. Thomas (ed.), *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, 7 vols. (Leiden and Boston: Brill): Vol. I, 585–594; F. González Muñoz (ed.) (2005), *Exposición y refutación del Islam: La versión latina de las epístolas de al-Hāssimī y al-Kindī* (A Coruña: Universidade de Coruña): 92.
6. C. Gruber and A. Shalem (2014), “Images of the Prophet Muhammad in a Global Context”, in: C. Gruber and A. Shalem (eds), *The Image of the Prophet between Ideal and Ideology: A Scholarly Investigation* (Boston and Berlin: Walter de Gruyter): 2.
7. Momigliano, “The Fault of the Greeks”, 11.
8. D. Fabrizio (2011), *Il profeta della discordia: Maometto e la polemistica islamocristiana medievale* (Rome: Aracne); M. Di Cesare (2012), *The Pseudo-Historical Image of the Prophet Muhammad in Medieval Latin Literature: A Repertory* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter); C. Ferrero Hernández and Ó. de la Cruz Palma (eds) (2014), *Vitae Mahometi: Reescritura e invención en la literatura cristiana de controversia* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas); A. Saviello (2015), *Imaginierungen des Islam: Bildliche Darstellungen des Propheten Mohammed im westeuropäischen Buchdruck bis ins 19. Jahrhundert* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter).
9. Two very good exceptions are M. Meserve (2008), *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press) and M. Dimmock (2013), *Mythologies of the Prophet Muhammad in Early Modern English Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
10. J.V. Tolan (2010), “European Accounts of Muhammad’s Life”, in: J.E. Brockopp (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Muhammad* (New York: Cambridge University Press): 226–250: 226.

11. See J.V. Tolan (2015), “Jews and Muslims in Christian Law and History”, in: A.J. Silverstein and G.G. Stroumsa (eds) and M. Bildstein (assoc. ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Abrahamic Religions* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press): 166–188.
12. See, for example, Z. Elmarsafy (2009), *The Enlightenment Qur'an: The Politics of Translation and the Construction of Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld).
13. The citation is from Gilles of Rome, *Errores Philosophorum* (1270). The original passage reads: “Quod nulla lex est vera, licet possit esse utilis”. I quote from the free translation provided by G.G. Stroumsa (2015), “Three Rings or Three Impostors? The Comparative Approach to the Abrahamic Religions and its Origins”, in: A.J. Silverstein and G.G. Stroumsa (eds) and M. Bildstein (assoc. ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Abrahamic Religions* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press): 56–70: 67.
14. An interesting discussion on this topic in A. Sterk and N. Caputo (eds) (2014), *Faithful Narratives: Historians, Religion, and the Challenge of Objectivity* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press).
15. N. Bisaha (2004), *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press); S.C. Akbari and K. Mallette (eds) (2013), *A Sea of Languages: Rethinking the Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press).
16. A. Castro (1954), “The Presence of the Sultan Saladin in the Romance Literatures”, *Diogenes*, 2, 13–36. See also A. D’Ancona (1994), *La leggenda di Maometto in Occidente*, 2nd ed. (Rome: Salerno editrice).
17. B. Giustinian (1493), *De origine urbis Venetiarum* (Venice: Bernardo Benaglio). The section on “Saracens” is in Book VIII, fols. 55^v–63^r.
18. An English summary of Giustinian’s passage on Muhammad is published in P.H. Labalme (1969), *Bernardo Giustiniani: A Venetian of the Quattrocento* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura): 291–294.
19. Giustinian, *De origine*, fols. 57^v–58^v: “Sarracenae autem sectae nihil apud suos. Apud nostros commentaria reperiuntur nonnulla. Quae deinde posteriores, sacris litteris dediti, non tam sribendae historiae gratia, quam eius confutandi erroris, memoriae tradidere. Ea prosequi non institui”.
20. Ibidem, fols. 57^v–58^r: “Addidit ad haec fabulas quasdam, ne pueris quidem, et aniculis recitandas. In quibus tempus terrere opere praecium non putavi. Quisquis nosse desiderat legat Alcoranum, generis humani miserebitur”.
21. Ibidem, fol. 57^r: “Miscere religionis aliquid opus est, et auctoritatem ex celo petere. Quod principes multi fecerunt. Moventur populi in primis religione”.
22. C. Ginzburg (2012), “Machiavelli, the Exception and the Rule: Notes from Research in Progress”, in: D. Know and N. Ordine (eds), *Renaissance Letters*

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23. On the biographies of Arab philosophers and physicians in Europe see D.N. Hasse (1997), “King Avicenna: The Iconographic Consequences of a Mistranslation”, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 60, 230–243; D.N. Hasse (2015), “Contacts with the Arab World”, in: S. Knight and S. Tilg (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Neo-Latin* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press), 279–293.
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 29. E.W. Cochrane (1981), *Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press): 329.
 30. J. Cuspinian (1561), *De Caesaribus atque Imperatoribus Romanis opus insigne* (Basel: Johann Oporinus and Nikolaus Brylinger): 532–538.
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32. Cuspinian, *De Caesaribus*, 533–534: “Columbam enim (quam Spiritum Sanctum callidissimus deceptor vocabat) assuefecit in aure sua pasci. Hanc sibi secretissima Dei consilia nunciare iactitabat mendacissimus nebulo, quoties ad aures pro nutrimento avis simplex volabat. Forte hunc dolum a Quinto Sertorio didicit, qui cervam circumduxit, ut milites falleret, quemadmodum Historiae Romanae prodiderunt”. Compare it with F. Filelfo (1502), *Epistolarum familiarum libri XXXVII ex eius exemplari transumpti* (Venice: Giovanni and Gregorio de Gregori): fol. 57v: “Cum enim columbam, quam Spiritum Sanctum, latro callidissimus, esse qui secum loqueretur iactitabat, assuefecisset in aure sua pasci; ac taurum quondam ex occulto, eius audita altiore voce, ad se festinare et Algoranum cornibus alligatum”.
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43. [G.B. Castrodardo (ed.)] (1547), *L'Alcorano di Macometto, nel qual si contiene la dottrina, la vita, i costumi, et le leggi sue* (Venice: Andrea Arrivabene); on this text see Tommasino, *L'Alcorano di Macometto*, 221–255; P.M. Tommasino (2012), “Leer a Maquiavelo, traducir el Corán: Muhammad, príncipe y legislador en el *Alcorano di Macometto* (Venecia, 1547)”, *Al-Qantara*, 33, no. 2, 271–296; P.M. Tommasino (2014), “Sul talento dei lettori”, *Storica*, 20, no. 58, 112–122.
44. Tommasino, *L'Alcorano di Macometto*, 104.

45. H. Den Boer and P.M. Tommasino (2014), “Reading the Qur’ān in the 17th-century Sephardi community of Amsterdam”, *Al-Qantara*, 35, no. 2, 461–491: 474–476.
46. Tommasino, *L’Alcorano di Macometto*, 221–255.
47. [Castrodardo (ed.)], *L’Alcorano di Macometto*, fol. III^v: “Il che fecero tutti gli antichi heroi, re e governatori da principio del mondo, non havendo più sicuro modo di signoreggiare che il timore e spavento della loro simolata religione”.
48. Ibidem, fol. IV^r: “securissimo ricetto de’ sgratati, ristoro degli afflitti dalla tirannia de’ prencipi christiani, ridotto di tutti i cacciati dall’avaritia loro’, and rifuggio de’ poveri oppressi di tutto il mondo”.
49. G. Casale (2013), “Seeing the Past: Maps and Ottoman Historical Consciousness”, in: H.E. Çipa and E. Fetvacı (eds), *Writing History at the Ottoman Court: Editing the Past, Fashioning the Future* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 80–99: 83.
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51. Pulido-Rull, “A pronouncement of Alliance”, 144.
52. E. Lippi (2001), “1517: l’ottava al servizio del Sultano”, *Quaderni veneti*, 34, 49–88; E. Lippi (2004), “Per dominar il mondo al mondo nato: Vita e gesta di Selim I Sultano”, *Quaderni Veneti*, 40: 17–106. The remaining text of the poem is published, with the same title, in *Quaderni Veneti*, 42 (2005), 37–118; 43 (2006), 35–91; 45 (2007), 7–61. See also E. Lippi (2004), “Born to Rule the World: An Italian Poet Celebrates the Deeds of the Sultan Selim I”, *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi*, 19, 87–92.
53. Lippi, “Per dominar il mondo al mondo nato”, 96: “Costui farà tornar la età de l’oro, /costui sarà sussidio di poëti, /costui farà fiorir il sacro alloro, /costui sarà cagion ch’ogni om s’aquesti (*sic*), /costui fia il lume del pegaso coro, /costui farà i lèoni mansueti, /costui domerà draghi, orsi e serpenti, /gli uccelli, i pesci e le terrestre genti”.
54. A. Blair (2011), *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information Before the Modern Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press).
55. Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, Palatino 1097, *Notizie intorno all’Alcorano*, fols. 107^r–110^v.
56. Ibidem, fol. 109^v: “Non vi è dubbio che le cose raccontate nel primo libro hanno del favoloso, ma il medesimo pare si possa dire di quelle di Romolo, di Numa Pompilio e di altri legislatori”.
57. Ibidem, fol. 107^r: “Alla prima che io ne favelli, dico essere verità infallibile che Maometto sia un pseudoprofeta, e che la sua legge sia empia

e falsa, opponendosi alla vera e santa di Cristo. Nondimeno pare a me che se moralmente parliamo, si possa dire essere egli stato non solo eguale a tutti gli altri Etnici legislatori, ma di gran lunga superiore, poiché per fondare una gran Monarchia non poteva a mio giudizio trovar legge che più gli tornasse in acconcio”.

58. Ibidem, fol. 108^v: “Insomma mi pare che a Roma faccino molto bene a non voler concedere licenza ad alcuno di leggere l’Alcorano perché potrebbe nelle persone idiole fare qualche non buona impressione”; fol. 107^v refers to the “nuova legge” introduced by Muḥammad.
59. G. Totaro (1993), “Da Antonio Magliabechi a Philip von Stosch: Varia fortuna del *De tribus impostoribus* e de *L'esprit de Spinoza* a Firenze”, in: E. Canone (ed.), *Bibliotecae Selectae da Cusano a Leopardi* (Firenze: Olschki), 549–570.

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CHAPTER 6

Mediterranean Exemplars: Jesuit Political Lessons for a Mughal Emperor

Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam

And therefore the form of writing which of all others is fittest for this variable argument of negotiation and occasions is that which Machiavel chose wisely and aptly for government; namely, discourses upon histories or examples. For knowledge drawn freshly, and in our view, out of particulars, knoweth the way best to particulars again; and it bath much greater life for practice when the discourse attendeth upon the example, than when the example attendeth upon the discourse.

Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning* (1605).

INTRODUCTION: JESUITS AND MUGHALS

By 1527, the year of the death of Niccolò Machiavelli in Florence, the two great early modern Iberian imperial and colonial enterprises were well on their way, that of the Spaniards in the Americas, and that of the Portuguese in Africa and Asia. The pair of major figures most

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associated with the early versions of these enterprises, Hernán Cortés on the Spanish side, and Afonso de Albuquerque on the Portuguese one, have often been loosely termed “Machiavellian” in retrospect, though neither could have had a direct acquaintance with the writings of the Florentine thinker in the years before 1527.¹ Rather, we are dealing with some form of broad family resemblance at best, perhaps mediated by a common reading of classical authors such as Livy and Vegetius. Cortés, it has been noted in a well-known essay by John Elliott, no doubt had “an attitude to Fortune not unlike that of Machiavelli”, and further “he knew that the man who aspired to master Fortune must possess innate qualities of resourcefulness and guile—those qualities which for Machiavelli helped to constitute *virtù*”.² But his attitude may have been no more marked than that of other contemporaries, many of whose phrases can echo those in Cortés’s celebrated letters from the time of the conquest of Mexico in a rather uncanny way.

The case of Albuquerque has been less carefully analysed from a “Machiavellian” perspective. A recent exercise by Ângela Barreto Xavier has attempted to do so by looking at a series of pointed questions: convergences and divergences in certain themes and their treatment; the question of Albuquerque’s education and the sources of his thinking. It is clear, for example, that Albuquerque had a far more marked pre-dilection in the direction of the eschatological than either Machiavelli or Cortés, as has been remarked by a number of authors. Yet, Barreto Xavier also concludes: “This rapid diagnosis shows us that we can establish points of convergence between Machiavelli and Albuquerque, particularly in relation to themes such as the connection between force and political reputation, the best methods of conquest, and the role of settlers in the preservation of territories. At the same time, the divergences are also clear in regard to other central issues, such as the role that mercenaries and fortresses can and ought to have in the conquest and conservation of territories, as well as the place given to Fortune (here equally translated as Divine Providence), in the success or lack of success of projects”.³ A possible line of analysis, which has hitherto received little attention, is in terms of a close reading of Albuquerque’s vocabulary, which—while using characteristically Christian themes such as of a *guerra justa* against “infidels”—also is quite insistent, for example, on thematising notions such as “dissimulation”, both in its nominal and verbal forms. This concerned both his own behaviour, and that of his enemies and rivals: for example, when reflecting on the elites of the Bijapur

Sultanate (from whom he had conquered Goa in 1510), he remarked that “these Turks are men who work harder to conserve their credit and fame than any other people whom I have seen, and they dissimulate on many things (*desimulam muitas cousas*), in order not to receive a loss [of face]”.⁴ At the same time, he also boasted that he had worked hard to have the Samudri Raja, ruler of Calicut, secretly killed by his own family, because this would facilitate a treaty between that port and the *Estado da Índia*: “I am certain that Nambiadery killed the Çamorym [Samudri Raja] with poison, because in all my letters I wrote to him that he should poison the Çamorym, and that I would come to a peace agreement with him”.⁵ The ostensible justification for this was that in 1500, the Samudri had committed an act of betrayal (*trayçam*) by attacking the Portuguese factory.

We are aware that by the late 1510s, the reputation of the Portuguese for dissimulation, chicanery and duplicity had reached some proportions in the littoral lands of the Indian Ocean. An early Portuguese embassy to the Husain Shahi court in Bengal in 1521 was thus surprised to be faced by courtiers, who had built up a veritable dossier concerning their earlier actions in various parts of the Indian Ocean, actions which all allegedly showed their cynicism, and incapacity to live up to the most simple promises.⁶ The death by drowning of the Gujarat Sultan, Bahadur Shah, in February 1537, when he had gone to meet the Portuguese governor Nuno da Cunha on board his ship off Diu, was often taken as a particularly flagrant instance of a lack of honourable comportment. In the last quarter of the sixteenth century, two writers in Arabic from Kerala—Shaikh Zain-ud-Din and Qazi Muhammad—made a long list of such actions attributed to the Portuguese, suggesting that they had no ethical basis for their statecraft, which was seemingly a mere tissue of opportunism and religious bigotry.⁷

The first Jesuit missions to be sent to the court of the Mughals in northern India in the late sixteenth century were therefore faced with something of a quandary. But they were not alone in this. The Jesuits sent to the Ming court might have been aware that from the early decades of the sixteenth century, horrible rumours had been put out regarding the Portuguese, notably that they were kidnappers and cannibals, who tortured and ate young Chinese children.⁸ The first Jesuits to systematically encounter the Mughals were those dispatched in 1580 to Fatehpur Sikri, Rodolfo Acquaviva, Antoni de Montserrat and Francisco Henriques. Since none of them was in fact Portuguese,

it may have helped them to keep subjects largely to the (paradoxically) less controversial sphere of religion, rather than enter into the questions of statecraft and the comportment of princes. Indeed, the reader of Montserrat's account of this mission is struck by several notable features. First, very little mention is made of European politics, whether in regard of Portugal or Spain (Montserrat, it may be noted, was not very well-disposed to the Habsburgs). The Portuguese king Sebastian, who had died in the recent battle of el-Ksar el-Kebir (1578), is never mentioned at all, and the brief rule of his successor, cardinal Henry (1578–1580), is only written about because Akbar apparently sometimes praised his “sanctity, fortitude and constancy”.⁹ Secondly, though Montserrat writes of Akbar's system of government, and his chief counsellors (including Shaikh Abu'l Fazl), he seems to have been unaware of the existence of any Mughal reflections on statecraft as such. He also obviously found that Muslim *'ulamā'* played too important a role in the Mughal dispensation, even if he recognised that Akbar himself was open to the criticisms of Islam made by the Jesuits in the course of the debates in court, and in the so-called *'ibādat khāna* (where representatives of different faiths were brought together to expound upon and debate their differences).

By the end of Akbar's reign, and the beginning of that of his son and successor Nur-ud-Din Jahangir (r. 1605–1627), a good deal had changed with regard to Jesuit dealings with the Mughals. The third Jesuit mission to the Mughals was far longer-lasting than its predecessors, and its tone also evolved from the relatively positive one of Montserrat to a far more sour and dyspeptic register. The chief actors among the Jesuits were Manuel Pinheiro, Bento de Góis (who eventually died on an exploratory mission to western China), and above all the Navarrese aristocrat Jerónimo Xavier (1549–1617). A fair amount has been written about Xavier in particular, and it is equally true that he was himself a prolific author, both in European languages and in Persian (although this authorship, as we shall see below, is more problematic than that in Portuguese, Spanish or Latin). Indeed, in some modern eyes, he is elevated almost to the status of two of his illustrious Jesuit contemporaries, the Italians Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) and Roberto de' Nobili (1577–1656).¹⁰ Xavier was the great-nephew (on the maternal side) of the famous Jesuit Francis Xavier, among the first members of the Society of Jesus to reach Asia, and mindful of the considerable prestige of his relative, eventually took on his surname rather than that with which he began life, namely Jerónimo de Ezpeleta y Goñi. He entered

the Society of Jesus in 1568, at the age of nineteen, and was trained at the Jesuit establishments in Alcalá and Toledo, before going on to Portugal. He then arrived in India in 1581, just after the Habsburg take-over of the Portuguese Crown, and spent the next decade and a half in Jesuit establishments at Bassein, Cochin and Goa, when he was eventually chosen—at the age of forty-five—to head the mission to the Mughal court in Lahore, accompanied initially by Pinheiro and Góis. The Jesuit party arrived at their destination in May 1595, and as Xavier was to write soon became “entirely occupied (...) in learning the Persian language”, in the optimistic hope that would have “mastered it within a year”. By September 1596, he would claim in a letter to the Jesuit Provincial that the Mughals were astonished by the level of “our Persian”, to the point that they had no more need of interpreters. A Jesuit chronicler, Fernão Guerreiro, would also boast a few years later that even the Persians took pleasure in “the propriety of his [Xavier’s] vocabulary and the choiceness of his diction”.¹¹

The reality, however, was rather more complex than this typically heroic narrative would suggest. In particular, Xavier took pains to diminish the role played by translators and cultural intermediaries in facilitating the participation by the Jesuits in the Mughal court. He also somewhat obfuscated the process by which he produced translations into Persian of works that he composed or compiled in European languages. These works were largely religious in nature, and included versions of the lives of Christ and the apostles. One of them has been recently edited and translated; this is the *Mir’āt al-Quds* (“Mirror of Holiness”, also called the *Dāstān-i Maśīh* or “Story of the Messiah”), completed in 1602, of which several quite richly illustrated manuscripts exist, suggesting that it did really attract Mughal curiosity.¹² In general, Xavier strove in these works to present the Mughal elites with accessible and attractive narratives regarding the Christian faith, based on a mix of textual sources (such as the writings of Flavius Josephus), and medieval legends and oral sources that commonly circulated even amongst churchmen. One work does however represent an exception to this rule, namely the *Fuente de Vida*, which is a tripartite conversation between the Philosopher (who stands in for an imaginary Mughal emperor, largely modelled on Akbar), the Father, and a somewhat passive Mulla, who is only there as a foil, while the Father eventually persuades the complaisant Philosopher of the soundness of the Christian standpoint, as opposed to that of the Muslims.¹³ Completed late in the reign of Akbar (in around 1600), this

polemical work was eventually rendered into Persian in around 1609 (thus, during the reign of Jahangir) as the *Āṣīna-yi Haqq-numā* (or “Truth-Showing Mirror”) of which an abridgment was also prepared. It sufficiently annoyed some Muslim readers that a series of refutations and counter-refutations were produced around it, extending into Iran and the Mediterranean world, the last in the series being that in around 1700 by a Portuguese convert to Shi‘ism, a certain ‘Ali Quli Jadid al-Islam.¹⁴

It is however clear to us that in order to produce these works in Persian, all before 1610, Xavier wound up depending heavily on a collaborator, a certain Maulana (or Mulla) ‘Abdus Sattar ibn Qasim Lahauri, himself the author of several interesting works, and who appears periodically in the Mughal court as late as 1619, when he presented the emperor Jahangir with an album of calligraphic specimens in the hand of his grandfather, Humayun.¹⁵ Sattar seems to have come into contact with the Jesuits sometime late in the 1590s, and was an active participant in the production of the *Mir’āt al-Quds* in 1602. In one of his writings, he implies that his collaboration with the Jesuits was at the direct instigation of Akbar himself, who had considered it appropriate that an ‘ālim in his court should penetrate the “secrets of that community” (the Franks, or Europeans), and reveal “what had remained hidden from sight on account of the strangeness of their language, and distance”. Thus, while Xavier attempted to learn Persian, Sattar seems quite quickly to have acquired a reading knowledge of Latin, though he cautions his reader that since “I have spent most of the time in producing translations, and did not have the opportunity to speak much, I am still not capable of conversation”. This thus enabled him in 1603 to produce a rather curious work entitled *Ahwāl-i Firangistān*, or *Samrat al-Falāsifa* (“Account of the Land of the Franks”, or “The Fruits of Philosophers”), containing *inter alia* an account of Jesus Christ, the rulers of Greece and Rome, as well as a depiction of the “celebrated philosophers” of ancient times.¹⁶ The chief sources he employed included the Latin Bible, as well as the historical works of St Antoninus, a Dominican friar and archbishop from mid fifteenth-century Florence. In point of fact, Sattar appears to have collaborated in every one of the Persian works attributed to Xavier, polishing and correcting them, rendering them culturally intelligible to Mughal readers, and also placing appropriate Perso-Islamic references within them which Xavier was himself incapable of doing. Despite this fact, there has been a certain reluctance in historiography to give him more than a grudging credit, and to state that “the extent

of this [Sattar's] assistance remains unknown".¹⁷ Sattar, for his part, is quite explicit in as late as 1610 about the imperfect knowledge of Persian (*kamdānišī dar Fārsī zabān*) that Xavier possessed.

It transpires however that around 1608, the relationship between Sattar and the Jesuits was turning sour. In Sattar's own account, at the time of the initial dealings some years before, he himself had been quite free of prejudice (*ta'assub*). However, with time he had come to see the falsity (*butlān*) of the Christians' ways, despite his feeling that Xavier himself was quite a truthful man. The problem seems in part to have been provoked by what he saw as the bigotry of some of the other Jesuits, as well as the absurdity and disgusting character of their beliefs. A particular telling confrontation occurred in the Mughal court in mid-August 1610, and it is reported (albeit in slightly different terms) by both Sattar and the Jesuit Manuel Pinheiro. The discussion began with some characteristically provocative assertions on the part of the Florentine Jesuit Francesco Corsi, regarding the falsity of Muḥammad's claims to prophecy. He also stated that given the superiority of the Christian faith, he hoped that Mulla 'Abdus Sattar, who was a man of letters and wise (*homo litteratus et sapiens*), would be prevailed upon to convert to that religion.¹⁸ When publicly pressed by Jahangir, however, Sattar was sufficiently provoked to respond that he even found the religion of the Gentiles (*ethnicorum* or *hunūd*) preferable to that of the Christians. So vehement was his assertion that Jahangir seems to have been left astonished. The Jesuits too were manifestly quite taken aback by the sustained attack he then mounted on them, complaining in their letters that he had been no better than Irus (*adeo Irus esset*)—a lowly character from the *Odyssey*—when they had first known him, but had then been given the command of a hundred horse, and 10,000 gold coins of revenue a year, only because of their doing. It is thus clear that by the end of 1610, cordial dealings between 'Abdus Sattar and the Jesuits had come to an end. So far as we are aware, this also marked the end of Xavier's literary production in Persian, even though he remained in the Mughal court until 1614.

A JESUIT AND “HIS” TEXT

In the years that he spent in Mughal India, almost all the works that Xavier wrote (or co-produced) which have come down to us have a markedly religious character, no surprise in view of the fact that he was

a missionary. The exception to this is a text completed in 1609, belonging to the “Mirrors for Princes” (or *specula principum*) genre, which was entitled *Ādāb al-Saltanat*, a title that Xavier himself rendered in Portuguese as *Directório de Reys*, meaning “Manual for Kings”.¹⁹ The work exists in two manuscript copies, one addressed to Claudio Acquaviva, the General of the Society of Jesus (and kept today in Rome), and the other (today in London) which was given by Xavier to the Florentine traveller and intellectual Giambattista Vecchietti.²⁰ The Portuguese summary runs as follows: “Manual for Kings, in which is treated how a King should behave in his government, composed by the Father Jerónimo Xavier of the Company of Jesus, addressed to the King Jahangir, Great Mogol, done in the Year of Our Lord 1609. It has four chapters: The 1st deals with how the King should deal with God; the 2nd how he should deal with himself; the 3rd with how he should deal with his grandees and officials; the 4th with how he should deal with his people. And with God, it would be with much reverence and obedience; with himself with a good balance in life in regard of all sorts of virtues; with his grandees and officials with doctrine and direction; with the people with love and providence and support”.

While writing this text, was Xavier even aware that an extensive body of “advice literature” already existed in Mughal India, to which Jahangir had access? If he was ignorant of this fact, ‘Abdus Sattar certainly was not. He would have undoubtedly known of texts going back at least to the *Tahzīb al-Akhlaq* (“Refinement of Ethics”) of Ibn Miskawaih (d. 1030), the *Siyar al-Mulūk* or *Siyāsat Nāma* (“Lives of Kings” or “Book of Government”) of Nizam-ul-Mulk (d. 1092), and the celebrated and much-cited work of Nasir-ud-Din Tusi (d. 1274), entitled *Akhlaq-i Nāsirī* (“Nasirean Ethics”).²¹ Closer to home, geographically and chronologically, the Mughals had a deep familiarity with a whole range of such materials, from Wa‘iz al-Kashifi’s *Akhlaq-i Muhsīnī* (“Muhsin’s Ethics”) to Ikhtiyar-ud-Din Husaini’s *Akhlaq-i Humāyūnī* (“Royal Ethics”), the latter a work completed in a Timurid political context and eventually dedicated to the young Mughal prince Babur, Jahangir’s own great-grandfather.²² In these works, especially those that derived from Tusi, key concepts included justice (*‘adl*) and social balance (*i‘tidāl*), to be ensured through appropriate regulations (*dastūr*). To be sure, these authors argued in an ideal world, cooperative social organisation could indeed be achieved purely through love and affection (*mahabbat*); but they were well aware that in reality, regular royal coercion

might be necessary to ensure justice. This justice, incidentally, also implied not distinguishing between Muslim and non-Muslims subjects (*ri‘āyā*), both of whom were entitled to compassion in equal measure, irrespective of their faiths. On the other hand, not all Mughal courtiers would have appreciated this “Nasirean” line of reasoning, and some would certainly have held to a more orthodox view (already popularised by some Delhi Sultanate ‘ulamā in the fourteenth century), in which the ruler was meant to uphold the primary place of Islam, and thus also distinguish between his subjects on the basis of their beliefs. By all accounts, the Jesuits appear to have doubted that such sophisticated reasoning as “Nasirean ethics” existed amongst the Mughals. In a treatise on the Mughal court, authored in about 1610 by either Xavier or Pinheiro, this was how they characterised Jahangir’s rule: “One could say that this King is not a Moor, nor Gentile, nor Christian, because he has no law (*ley*) in which he believes firmly like other people; he is a barbarian who lives by fate and fortune (*vive ao nasibo*), follows his appetites, and is full of great pride and the vainglory of the world. He thinks that he alone is lord of all, and he is very cruel, and vengeful—with no mercy at all”.²³

The *Ādāb al-Sultanat*, even if it was addressed then to a “barbarian”, still needed to follow certain conventions. It was written in a rather simple and straightforward style for a courtly text, which is to be distinguished somewhat from that which Sattar used in his other writings; however, its linguistic usages are perfectly correct, indicating that Sattar had gone over the text with some care. The religious register is also deliberately ambiguous; while the first page of the manuscript has a cross, immediately below it there appears the standard *Bismillāh* invocation, whereas in at least one of his other texts, Xavier has preferred “in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who are one God”. The text of the *Ādāb* then continues:

It is a beautiful duty to thank that governor of the world (*jahāndār*) before whose threshold (*‘utba*) hereditary rulers increase the fortune and capital of their grandeur and majesty by offering obeisance.

How can I even thank Him,
For I don’t have the words.
God’s vase is so full,
And my cup is all-too-small.

And nor am I of the level of Plato,
For God's glory is even greater than what is commonly said.

It is astonishing – *Subhān Allāh* – that even a stranger, and humble dervish who has no interest in the world's affairs, can presume to place the regulations of empire and the laws of rulership (*zawābit-i khilāfat wa qawāniñ-i farnāndibī*) before such a ruler of the world who with the help of God's grace, and on account of the support of his high fortune, has come to know the secrets of conquest and governance (*jahāngīrī wa jabāndārī*). Yet, this supplicant has for years been studying the accounts of people of Antiquity, and with the guidance of his intelligence, he has been able to glean some rules to place before the assembly; may this be taken as an expression of my devotion to you and as a natural result of what I have been fortunate enough to gather from the words of the great people of yore, reading whom gives one intelligence.²⁴

Can we see here already a deliberate but concealed echo of the dedication of Machiavelli's *Prince* to Lorenzo de' Medici, which describes its author as a “man of low and humble station”, who has nevertheless engaged in a “continual reading of ancient [matters]” and then prepared a digest of it? This is a point to which we shall return below.²⁵ The text goes on to state that God gives rise to everything on account of His wisdom (*dānish*); it therefore follows that God's creatures will live in harmony when they too make use of wisdom, which is the measure of everything, and necessary for all actions. Wisdom, it is noted, is the moving cause (*illat*) of everything, and it can make a man a craftsman, a general, a just governor or a perfect king. This is because according to each man's capacity, wisdom decides in what way he can be distinguished in his skills. A classical example is cited (from the western tradition) of a philosopher who was enslaved and taken to the slave market. When a rich man was prepared to buy him, and asked him if he had a skill, he replied that his real skill was in knowing how to command free men (*mardūm-i āzād*). The buyer was so pleased by his quick wit that he at once freed him and made him the tutor of his sons. The text then mentions a number of key purveyors of political wisdom from the Mediterranean: Plato was the master of Dionysius of Syracuse, Aristotle taught the world-conqueror Alexander, and Solon taught the residents of Lacedaemonia the regulations of rulership (*qawāniñ-i salṭanat*). Still another philosopher, Seneca, had as a disciple the Caesar Nero, to whom he taught the norms of governance and the rulership

of this world (*ādāb-i jahāndārī wa farmāndihī-i ān jahān*). The rulers of Rome engraved his words on a silver tablet, and also carved them on gold coins, so that they might be known in a stable fashion in the future. Whenever a new ruler came to the throne, these words would then be read out to him. Another philosopher called Plutarch had the emperor Trajan as his disciple. It was in their spirit that the work's humble author (*bi istitā'at*), by name Padre Jerónimo Xavier, who had spent an age reading the works of the prophets and ancient sages, now had the audacity to bring this work to the Mughal emperor's majestic presence. Xavier goes on to note that he should rightly have translated these ancient authors directly into Persian. But since their works were not available in India (*dar īn diyār*), he has instead chosen some selected stories and reports from their works.

In these early passages, we can already see clear signs of Sattar's handiwork, overlaid on Xavier's concrete examples. The repeated rhetorical attention to concepts such as wisdom (*hikmat*) and rationality (*tadbīr*), which are intended to glean important lessons (*'ibrat*) is the work of someone who knows the characteristic Indo-Persian *topoi* of the moment. So are flourishes, in which "Xavier" writes of how he has taken his old and fragile body, read and worked day and night, and placed some "flowers laden with the breeze of wisdom (*gullā-i dānish-nasīm*)" on his eyelashes.²⁶ There are some characteristic phrases of *captatio benevolentiae* that Sattar has used elsewhere, notably the reference to the author's feeble command of language (*kajmuj zabān*). But the structure of the work, it is claimed, owes itself above all to Plutarch, who had stated that four things were important for emperors. This then explained the contents of the book (*fīhrīst-i kitāb*), in four parts (or *fasl*), which are briefly summarised. The first part deals with the respect (*'izzat*) that the king owes to God, with examples of the punishment to those unfortunates who have disobeyed. The second part regards the ruler's self-improvement, bearing in mind that he ought seek the public good (*bahbūd-i khalā'iq*), and not his own benefit. The ruler should be brave (*jawānmard*), merciful and kind, avoiding flatterers and back-stabbers. The third *fasl* then moves on to the training for officials (*'uhdadārān*). These include favourites, who should be steadfast in friendship and companionship, as well as leaders and generals. The fourth part then deals with nobles, soldiers, merchants and other common folk. Finally, there is an epilogue summarising the advice apparently given by Maecenas to the Caesar Augustus (or "Baukustu"). It is further noted at the very outset

that Persophone readers will notice that the text contains many unfamiliar names of prophets, philosophers, kings and nobles. These have therefore been especially noted in the text's margins.

The examples chosen throughout the *Ādāb* thus vary considerably in terms of both period and source. The Bible is periodically drawn upon, as might have been expected, and of the classical authors it is Plutarch who is the most frequently referred to. Of other authors, Cicero does find mention in Xavier's correspondence, notably his *De Officiis*. It would appear that the Jesuits, while at Lahore and Agra, did have a modest Latin library at their disposition, but it is also of note that they periodically dipped into the Mughal *kitābkhana* (or royal library). However, we must also not neglect the fact that Xavier had a fondness for oral materials and stories, and that he therefore did not necessarily use textual citation as his main source of *exempla*. Let us turn to some of these latter cases, to see what materials Xavier used, and how he employed them. This must of course be done bearing in mind that a brief essay like this one can hardly do justice to a text which accounts for nearly three hundred pages in manuscript.

Towards the end of the section on the king's advisers (*nāsīhān-i bādshāh*), we find the following anecdote:

At the time when Portugal was ruled over a king (*shabryār*) called Dom João II [John II], a wise man visited from another kingdom. When he returned to his country, his king asked him what he had seen in Portugal which appeared better [than in his own land]. He said: "I saw a man who ruled over all. No one else could command him". He said this because that *bādshāh* would privately deal with wise people with a great deal of humility. However, when he was in public, he would appear in all his pomp and greatness (*buzurgī wa sāhibī*). He would still be kindly, and would say that he had done something on the advice of such-and-such a person, and in this or that manner, so that his commands could appear reliable. Still, in this way, the other elders (*buzurgān*) would not become arrogant. The *bādshāh* used to say that a man whose decisions are [wholly] dependent on the opinions of others is not deserving of command and rulership. He also used to say that such a relationship would lead to the ruin of the country.²⁷

Both the example chosen, and the type of behaviour mentioned, are significant. King John II (r. 1481–1495), the so-called “perfect prince”, was known for his great ruthlessness and personal violence in dealing with enemies. Further, the quality chosen to be illustrated here is telling:

the monarch accepted advice in private, but when in public made it a point not to allow his dependence on advice to be apparent. Xavier's methods are often somewhat confusing. Thus for example, he is capable of following the anecdote on fifteenth-century Portugal with another regarding Moses (on the question of the delegation of power), or the unwise Absalom, son of David. But soon enough he returns to the king of Portugal, one of his favourites:

It is reported that the *bādshāh* of Portugal, Dom João II, kept a list of all the people capable of holding high office (*manāsib-i ‘azīm*). Whenever a post came to be vacant, he would consult his register and take a name to whom the post would be awarded. The *bādshāh* of Spain, Dom Felipe II [Philip II], had deputed some men to the *madrasas* of his realm, to keep him informed of who was capable there, to be given appropriate posts. He kept a list (*tūmār*) of such people with himself, and whenever he needed it, he would read the list and take capable men from it, to award them positions. As a matter of fact, whenever an official (*‘uhdadār*) dies, this is what should be done, rather than beginning a search after someone has died. For, when one is in a hurry, it may be hard to find someone. As a result, the post is given to someone who happens to be at hand, and those who are best qualified may be excluded and forgotten.²⁸

Contrasted to wise rulers such as John II and Philip II of Spain (r. 1556–1598), is the feckless King Sebastian, concerning whom Xavier has no great opinion (perhaps because he eventually disregarded the strategic advice of his Jesuit counsellors). As if to emphasise this, an anecdote about the Portuguese king is preceded here by one concerning Alexander, who is portrayed as always capable of learning from his errors and improving as a consequence. The hammer then falls, with a story concerning Sebastian's fatal expedition of 1578:

The king of Portugal, Dom Sebastião [Sebastian], was going to fight a war in Africa (*Ifrikiyya*). First, he went to the king of Castile, Dom Felipe, and requested him to send one of his experienced generals, the Duke of Alba, who had won many victories. He asked Alba if he would be willing to go with him on that war. He replied: “Sire (*Sāhib*), please don't ask me this”. “Why”, said the king? He replied: “You should not take me. It so happens that whenever the Qaisar, my master, would take me along to war, he knew my nature. So, he would hand over the entire charge of the army to me. Not only would the army be under my command, even the

ruler would follow me, even though the ruler knows much about matters of war". But, here we had a different ruler, and he [Alba] feared that he would interfere in matters of war, and not allow him his own initiative as commander. For he [Sebastian] did not know that capable men should be left to do their work, and that it would be wrong to interfere.²⁹

The tone here is thus pragmatic and uncomplicated, as opposed to other parts of the text, where Xavier borders on the sententious. Good rulers must be proper judges of men, and allow them place to function without undue interference. Delegation, in Xavier's book, is a hallmark of proper royal functioning. For him, the efficient working of a sultanate depends on three or four crucial posts, on which the others were then dependent. Sometimes officials would fight amongst themselves, and this should be controlled. So, there would be someone who is just (*ādil*) to deal with such matters, while those who commit tyrannies should be punished. A second crucial office was that of a *wazīr* who knows how to handle tax-collection and manage the treasury (*māl*). A third official should handle matters of war, the frontiers (*hudūd-i wilāyat*) and peace and stability inside the realm. These functions are summarised in Persian then as *'adālat-i ri'āya, tahsīl-i māl-i bādshāhī* and *umniyat-i mulk*. To these ends, officials should receive an education and proper advice from the emperor, so that they perform in a god-fearing (*khudā tarṣī*) manner.

Xavier is also not above sometimes distorting history to make a striking point. Thus he recounts the following, deliberately garbled story, in order to make a point regarding how treasury officials could be miserly and thereby miss great opportunities:

At the time of the ruler of Portugal, Dom Manuel, a man called Colón [Columbus] came from another place, about which no information was known, and which was beyond the inhabited quarter (*rūb-i maskūn*). He brought news from there that it was called the new world (*ālam-i nau*). He requested the ruler for some men to accompany him back there, and bring the people under the obedience of the king. The gold and silver mines there would come under the king's treasury. The nobles (*arkān-i daulat*) did not believe this news. But the ruler thought it was a good idea, and said that this man should be kept happy and given what he wanted. The *dīwān* was also of the same view that he should be given the supplies he wanted. But miserliness stood in the way, and he was not given what he wanted. Not being given what he wanted, the man was not satisfied. Had another 100 *rupiyās* been given, he might have been contented. Becoming

disgruntled, he went to the kingdom of Castile, where the ruler gave him an appropriate reward, and a large force, so that he went back again to that land and brought a huge territory under his control. Every year, the kingdom of Castile received something of the order of 20 or 30 millions from those lands. So, on account of the wickedness of his *wazīr*, this wealth slipped from the hands of the king of Portugal. Whereas those who spent a little, gained a lot. Thus, the *dīwān* should have the qualities of wisdom, balance, honesty, and sincerity, but he should also have the courage to spend at the appropriate time.³⁰

A particularly interesting set of examples concerns the use in statecraft of stratagems and trickery (*hīlā wa tilism*) and the extent to which they can legitimately be considered an aspect of pragmatism and wisdom (*hikmat-o-dānish*). An example is used regarding Alexander and Darius in this regard, which Xavier regards as legitimate, where Alexander allegedly tied branches on the horns of oxen before his army, so that the enemy saw them as a forest. Alexander's army remained concealed, and then mounted a sudden attack, to gain a victory. He also mentions an unusual anecdote regarding Amir Timur and his deployment of intelligent trickery (*tilism-i āqilāna*). However, he insists, Timur always managed to combine trickery with manliness (*mardāngī*) and bravery (*jalādat*) to score his victories.³¹ This was even the case when he used a stratagem (*hikmat*) against the Tatar ruler Tokhtamysh. The Jesuit here compares tactics such as these to that of the Trojan horse, which to him can indeed be justified. At the same time, he hastens to warn, there is a distinction between trickery, making excuses and outright deceit (*be-darogh farīb*). Even if Alexander's father Philip allegedly used to say that in order to gain power, any means was permissible, the wise men of that age did not agree with him, because they rightly felt that truth could not so easily be sacrificed. This is then illustrated by him at some length using the episode of Viriatus, the Portuguese general (*sipāh-sālār-i Purtugāl*), who fought the Romans in the second century BCE. Because deceit was used against him, it is claimed that the Roman authorities reprimanded their army, and the general Galba, saying: "You brought a land under our control, but you destroyed our good name and honour (*neknāmī wa ābrū*). The pride that we had in our truthfulness has been transformed into the humiliation of treachery (*bad-‘ahdī*)".³² Xavier thus underlines that the Romans were great precisely because they did not usually employ treachery (*farīb-o-daghā*) in their dealings with enemies. Of course, it was

equally a measure of their intelligence that were not naïve enough to fall victim to treachery either, as this would have been a sign of their stupidity and humiliation (*bi-dānīshī wa subkī*).

Xavier's text thus attempts to walk an interesting middle path here. For example, he states explicitly that every ruler and general should employ "spies who are curious and reliable (*jāsīsān-i mutafahis-i mu'tabar*)", using them also to give selected favours to the adversaries in order to divide them. He even claims that the Habsburg ruler, Philip II, had bribed several members of the Ottoman ruling council (*majlis*) to keep him well-informed. In a similar vein, an anecdote regarding an expedition by the ruler of Portugal, Dom Afonso V, is used to argue that "concealment is an important part of war. The general should keep his thoughts locked in his chest and only an intimate should have the key".³³ He even implies that Cortés would never have succeeded in the New World (*ālam-i jadīd*), if he had not tricked his soldiers into following him. Yet, in many circumstances, the two most important qualities are loyalty (*wafādārī*) and steadfastness (*istiqāmat*), and the question remains of how to ensure them. As an example of this, he relates a celebrated anecdote concerning Martim de Freitas, commandant of the town of Coimbra in Portugal under Dom Sancho II, and his brother Afonso III, who refused to hand over his town until he was satisfied that his master was dead.³⁴ He further notes that in some cases, truly loyal men may use ingenious stratagems in pursuit of their loyalty, as was the case with Don Íñigo López de Mendoza, who had been in charge of the fort of Alhama de Granada when it was under attack.

A long and rather complex sequence of anecdotes, apparently deriving in large measure from the romance of *El Cid*, typifies Xavier's considerable hesitation in dealing with what would soon be thematised in Spain under the head of *razón de Estado*.³⁵ These concern the ruler of Castile, Don Alfonso VI (1040–1109), who when he was a youth, fought with his brother and took refuge with the ruler of Toledo, 'Ali Mu'min, who treated him with great respect and honour. One day, while walking in a garden, that ruler asked his ministers from which direction the Franks (or Christians) could attack his city, so that he might strengthen the defences. They replied that the fortress had no weaknesses, but that if it were besieged for 7 years, it would eventually run out of supplies. In the midst of this consultation, they found a youth (in fact Don Alfonso himself) apparently sleeping in the garden. They were alarmed, but decided that he posed no threat as he was asleep. To make sure, however, they

decided to test him by saying that they would melt some mica (*shīsha*) and put it on his hand. They began to melt the mica, and eventually dropped it on his hand. Then, at last, he pretended to awake with a cry. By this means, he came to know their secret, effectively betraying their hospitality. After some time, Don Alfonso's brother died, and he sought permission from 'Ali Mu'min to return, and the latter told him to remain a faithful friend to him and his son. On his return, Don Alfonso then became the king, and after some years, he learnt that there was a quarrel between the Muslim rulers of Toledo and Córdoba. Alfonso came to the aid of the former, and the two gained a victory with extensive plunder. After this, the ruler of Toledo died, as did his son. Don Alfonso now considered himself freed from his earlier promise (*az 'ubda-i sangand*). So he attacked Toledo with a large army. On the basis of what he had overheard, he laid siege to the city for seven years, and at the end of this time, the city surrendered and the inhabitants gave him the keys, but on the condition that their chief mosque (*masjid-i kalān*), which had earlier been the chief church of the Franks (*kalīsa-i buzurg*), should not be reconverted into a church.³⁶

Don Alfonso agreed to this condition, entered the city and began to rule. However, he himself remained disturbed by the fact that the church was a mosque. But he remained true to his promise, though he was pressed on the matter by the leaders of his faith (*sardār-i dīn*). At some point he had to leave the city for a war and left the queen Constance of Burgundy with the responsibility of the city. When he was far away, she took the opportunity, expelled the Muslims and re-established Christian worship there. Though the Muslims were told that this was done on the ruler's orders, they got their elders together and went to plead with the ruler on his campaign, saying that he had broken his pledge. He was saddened to hear that he was now charged with oath-breaking and faithlessness ('abd-shikānī wa bī-i 'tabārī). He also feared a rebellion of the large population of Muslim subjects. Don Alfonso informed the queen and the archbishop (Bernard de Sedirac) that he would punish them. The Muslims returned to the town and awaited his return. The queen and archbishop were aware of the ruler's nature, and they sent their agents to the ruler with excuses, but he turned them away. When he approached the town, they even sent monks (*zāhidān wa 'abidān*) with further pleas, but that too did not work. The queen then got together a large crowd with a cross in front and in the Christian manner (*rawish-i 'Isawiyān*) made up a procession. Some of the more cunning priests dressed the

ruler's daughter in ragged clothes, barefoot, with a rope around her neck and with her hair in a matted style. Anyone who saw her, no matter how hard-hearted, was certain to melt. Even the Muslims who saw the sight felt sorry. When the ruler heard that such a procession was approaching, at first he was angry. But when he saw the holy cross, he got off his throne and knelt to pay his respects. The priests were meanwhile chanting from the Bible and Psalms. Don Alfonso was now quite perplexed. On the one hand was the pressure of the godly men, and on the other side was his promise. When he saw his fifteen-year-old daughter in that state, his heart did indeed melt. Even the Muslims began to weep in these circumstances. But Alfonso would still not relent and he told his daughter not to demand anything for her mother. He swore on God and on his own crown (*tāj-i sultānat*) that he would keep his word. The daughter then pleaded with him saying that she was aware that her mother had seized the mosque and tarnished his honour. The ruler then looked to the Muslims expecting them to respond. They thought that if they obliged him to kill his queen the other Christians would in turn desire revenge on them and their children. They considered it better to win over the queen and other leaders. The Muslim leaders asked him therefore to listen to his daughter and forgive the queen for they were fully satisfied (*taskīn-i kūlī*) that he was a just ruler. They also agreed that the mosque could remain converted into a church. Xavier notes that such an ointment (*tūtiya*) was needed so that the ruler could retract his pledge. He could then tell his daughter with affection to inform the queen that she was forgiven, but that she should never again place him in such a quandary again. Don Alfonso then went to the church, where the terrified archbishop was unable to meet his eye. He was well-received and blessed with holy water and forgave the archbishop as he had also done the queen. The Christians were satisfied and the Muslims too were content to see how much a man of his word he was.³⁷

Don Alfonso is presented here as an ideal to be followed by other statesmen. But the two episodes are in fact deeply ambiguous. In the first, while enjoying the hospitality of the ruler of Toledo he betrays his confidence so that he can conquer the city at a later time. In the second, after having promised the Muslims of Toledo to look after their interests, he effectively puts them on the spot, so that they are obliged to release him from his bond out of fear of retaliation and revenge from the Christians of the town. Was this meant to imply that the Mughals too should not look to the interests of their non-Muslim subjects and

sacrifice them at the altar of expediency? This could hardly have been what Xavier had in mind. Perhaps what mattered in the end was not what Don Alfonso had done, but the fine reputation he maintained in spite of what he did.

Xavier would eventually close his work (the so-called *khātimā-yi kitāb*) in a far more sententious style. This was with the advice allegedly given to Augustus Caesar by his adviser, Maecenas. Xavier reports that Augustus had thought of giving up the emperorship to retire, and spend the rest of his life in leisure. He therefore brought all the elders together, in order to hand power over to them, and gave them a brief speech of advice (*nasā'ih ba tarīqa-i iżāz*). He told them to keep alive the old regulations of rulership and not make any changes in them. Wise persons should be placed in charge of the cities both in peace and in war. There should be no envy amongst the rulers and government should be for the welfare of the people. They should respect those who were faultless and appropriately reward those who did their duty well. They should also respect the property (*māl*) of others and not covet it. One should not harass one's enemies without reason and not fear them either. Romans should be prepared to fight, but at the same time when someone wanted to make peace, accept it. The subsequent advice (*pand-hā*) of Maecenas (or rather of Pseudo-Maecenas) is hardly more than a tissue of clichés and nostrums either. Rome, he says, needs a far-sighted planner (*mud-abbir-i sāhib-i tadbīr*) to guide it, to navigate the waves that buffet it and the winds that blow over it. The desire for peace (*sulh*) should be uppermost in the ruler's mind. The weak should be protected from the strong and the strong should be kept to the path of justice. And so on. The *Ādāb al-Saltanat* then concludes:

The request of this slave is that the things that have been written in this book may be weighed in the balance of noble reason, and the points that at this stage could be useful may be chosen. In the court of that Ruler, who is the King of Kings (*Shāh-i Shāhān*), I constantly pray that He may guide His Majesty (*hazrat*) with His grace and mercy so that he may rule well over the kingdom. Further, that the Master of all hearts may incline the hearts of all the humble folk to the service of the king. And that the heart of the Shadow of God (*Hazrat-i Zill-i Subhānī*) may be attentive to the care and protection of the subjects. May the Emperor, Refuge of the Caliphate, and his followers and associates be in peace and happiness in this world, and acquire the highest state in the next world, which is the assembly of all virtues.³⁸

CONCLUSION

Educated in Iberia in the 1560s and 1570s, it is certainly possible that the Jesuit Jerónimo Xavier would have read and indirectly come across the texts of Machiavelli's *Prince* or *Discourses*, or other works. Indeed, in the *Ādāb*, there is even a brief and enigmatic passage regarding a certain "Nikolayu" of Florence, who is said to have declared: "Other things can be compensated for. But if an error is made in war, there is no way to repair it. The loss of honour is permanent, resulting in death and destruction".³⁹ Could this be a coy and cryptic reference to Machiavelli's *Art of War*? To be sure, some contemporary members of the Jesuit order knew these texts because they then wrote strongly anti-Machiavellian works—meaning men like Juan de Mariana (1536–1624) and Pedro de Ribadeneyra (1526–1611), who were responsible for prohibiting Machiavelli's works in Spain in 1583–1584. Even in Portugal, where Machiavelli's work was prohibited in 1559, it has been shown that it nevertheless continued to circulate thereafter.⁴⁰ The sort of "Mirrors for Princes" from the sixteenth century that contemporaries could also have read might have been works like Erasmus's *Institutio Principis Christiani*, written around the same time as *The Prince*, and addressed to the future Charles V, but we should note that Erasmus had fallen into disfavour in Spain by Xavier's time.⁴¹ It is striking to us that Xavier, when deciding to produce his *Ādāb* or *Directório*, turned—like Machiavelli—to a deliberately archaic model, as if the world of the Romans rather than that of his contemporaries was of the greatest relevance.⁴²

However, when it came to executing his task, Xavier's strategy turned out to be far more incoherent (or at least eclectic). Given his liking for narrative and anecdotes drawn from the oral sphere, already rather evident in his other works, he produced a work that was far closer in both tone and content to Machiavelli rather than Erasmus. Further, many of his examples did not come from the safe spheres of Antiquity (whether the Bible or the Greek and Roman worlds), but from medieval and contemporary times. By directly addressing such issues as stratagems, trickery and deceit, he also brought his work within touching distance of considerations of a consideration of *Realpolitik*. This was a rather different tone than that adopted in standard works of "Nasirean ethics" popular at the Mughal court, to which his collaborator 'Abdus Sattar's own language took him; ironically, they carried a far greater echo of the vernacular traditions of *nīti* that were popular in India at that time, but

which Xavier was almost certainly unfamiliar with.⁴³ In short, Xavier did not introduce openly Machiavelli to Mughal India for the most obvious reasons: he could not for political reasons and he probably would not have wished to anyway. But it appears that some traces of the odour (and perhaps even the words) of the Florentine nevertheless slipped in one way or another through the cracks.

NOTES

1. G. Bouchon (1992), *Albuquerque, le lion des mers d'Asie* (Paris: Editions Desjonquères): 222; B. Pastor Bodmer (1992), *The Armature of Conquest: Spanish Accounts of the Discovery of America, 1492–1589*, trans. L. Longstreth Hunt (Stanford: Stanford University Press): 82–83.
2. J.H. Elliott (1989), “The Mental World of Hernán Cortés”, in his *Spain and Its World, 1500–1700: Selected Essays* (New Haven: Yale University Press): 34–35.
3. Â. Barreto Xavier (2014), “A maior empresa que nunca um príncipe cristão teve nas mãos”: Conquistar e conservar territórios no Índico nos tempos de Maquiavel”, *Revista Tempo*, 20, 1–27: 19.
4. Lisbon, Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (henceforth ANTT), Corpo Cronológico (henceforth CC), I–10–113, Afonso de Albuquerque to King Dom Manuel, on the ship Santo António before Bhatkal, 18 October 1512, published in: R.A. de Bulhão Pato and H. Lopes de Mendonça (eds) (1884–1935), *Cartas de Affonso de Albuquerque seguidas de documentos que as elucidam* (henceforth CAA), 7 vols. (Lisbon: Academia das Ciências): Vol. I, 92: “estes turcos sam homeens que mais trabalham por comserval ho credito e sua fama que nenhūa outra jemte que tenha visto, e desimulam muitas cousas, por nam receberem qebra”.
5. ANTT, CC, I–13–112, Albuquerque to Dom Manuel, Kannur, 30 November 1513, published in CAA, Vol. I, 131: “eu ey por certo que o Nambiadery matou o Çamorym com peçonha, porque em todalas minhas cartas lhe esprevi que matase ele ho Çamorym com peçonha, e que na paz eu me concertaria com ele”.
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7. Shaykh Zainuddin Makhdum (2006), *Tuhfat al-Mujāhidīn: A Historical Epic of the Sixteenth Century*, trans. S.M.H. Nainar (Kuala Lumpur and Calicut: Islamic Book Trust and Other Books); Qadi Muhammad (2015), *Fat'h al-Mubin: A Contemporary Account of the Portuguese Invasion on Malabar in Arabic Verse*, ed. K.S. Shameer (Calicut: Other Books).

8. K.C. Fok (1987), “Early Ming Images of the Portuguese”, in: R. Ptak (ed.), *Portuguese Asia: Aspects in History and Economic History (Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries)* (Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag): 143–155.
9. A. de Montserrat (1922), *The Commentary (...) on His Journey to the Court of Akbar*, ed. and trans. S.N. Banerjee and J.S. Hoyland (London: Milford): 128–129.
10. Á. Santos Hernández (1962), *Jerónimo Xavier, apóstol del Gran Mogol y arzobispo electo de Cranganor en la India* (Pamplona: Príncipe de Viana); H. Didier (2011), “Jerónimo Xavier, un Navarro en la India”, in: V. Maurya and M. Insúa (eds), *Actas del I Congreso Ibero-asiático de Hispanistas: Siglo de oro e Hispanismo general* (Pamplona: Publicaciones de la Universidad de Navarra): 147–158.
11. See the discussion in M. Alam and S. Subrahmanyam (2012), *Writing the Mughal World: Studies on Culture and Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press): 261–263.
12. P. Moura Carvalho (2012), *Mir'āt al-quds (Mirror of Holiness): A Life of Christ for Emperor Akbar: A Commentary on Father Jerome Xavier's Text and the Miniature of Cleveland Museum of Art, Acc. 2005. 145*, trans. W.M. Thackston (Leiden and Boston: Brill).
13. J. Xavier (2007), *Fuente de vida: Tratado apologético dirigido al Rey Mogol de la India en 1600*, eds. H. Didier, I. Cacho Nazábal and J.L. Orella Unzué (San Sebastián: Universidad de Deusto).
14. F. Richard (1984), “Un augustin portugais renégat, apologiste de l’Islam chiite au début du XVIIIe siècle”, *Moyen Orient et Océan Indien*, I, 73–85.
15. For a full discussion, see the editors’ introduction to ‘Abdus Sattar ibn Qasim Lahauri (2006), *Majālis-i Jahāngīrī: Majlis-hā-yi shabāna-i darbār-i Nūr al-Dīn Jahāngīr az 24 Rajab 1017 tā 19 Ramazān 1020*, eds. ‘A. Naushahi and M. Nizami (Tehran: Miras-i Maktub): 23–85.
16. No edition currently exists of this widely-dispersed text, and we have consulted the manuscript in New Delhi, National Archives of India, Ms. 2713. Other manuscripts may be found in the British Library, Cambridge University Library, John Rylands Library (Manchester), etc.
17. Carvalho, *Mir'āt al-Quds*, 12.
18. Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, Ms. 4156, letter from Manuel Pinheiro in Agra, 9 September 1610, 217–230: “Occasione data Pater Regem affatur: Mula Abducetar Christianae aptus est legi, quippe homo litteratus est et sapiens” (p. 221) Our thanks for help in reading this text to Daniele Conti and Giuseppe Marcocci. Compare the account in ‘Abdus Sattar, *Majālis-i Jahāngīrī*, 70–75.
19. See a brief description of the text in A. Sidarus (2011), “A Western Mirror for Princes for an Eastern Potentate: The *Ādāb al-saltanat* by Jerome

- Xavier S.J. for the Mogul Emperor”, *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies*, 63, no. 1–2, 73–98, with some images of the manuscript. Also see the discussion in C. Lefèvre (2012), “Europe-Mughal India-Muslim Asia: Circulation and Political Ideas and Instruments in Early Modern Times”, in: A. Flüchter and S. Richter (eds), *Structures on the Move: Technologies of Governance in Transcultural Encounter* (Berlin: Springer Verlag): 127–146: 131–137.
20. We have used the manuscript in Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense (hereafter BC), Ms. 2015 (267 ff.), which we cite with the folio number hereafter. Sidarus has used the manuscript in the London, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Ms. 7030 (286 ff.). Both date from 1609.
 21. For the early part of this tradition, see the discussion in N. Yavari (2014), *Advice for the Sultan: Prophetic Voices and Secular Politics in Medieval Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press). This work however almost entirely ignores the Indo-Persian tradition.
 22. M. Alam (2004), *The Languages of Political Islam in India, c. 1200–1800* (Delhi: Permanent Black): 46–80.
 23. J. Flores (2016), *The Mughal Padshah: A Jesuit Treatise on Emperor Jahangir’s Court and Household* (Leiden and Boston: Brill): 94–95 (translation); 135 (text).
 24. BC, Ms. 2015, fols. 1b–2a.
 25. Relevant passages from *The Prince*’s dedication include: “I have found among my treasures nothing I hold dearer or value so high as my understanding of great men’s actions, gained in my lengthy experience with recent matters and my continual reading on ancient ones. My observations—which with close attention I have for a long time thought over and considered, and recently have collected in a little volume—I send to Your Magnificence. (...) No one, I hope, will think that a man of low and humble station is overconfident when he dares to discuss and direct the conduct of princes (...)”, N. Machiavelli (1989), *The Chief Works and Others*, ed. and trans. A. Gilbert, 3 vols. (Durham and London: Duke University Press): Vol. I, 10.
 26. BC, Ms. 2015, fol. 4b.
 27. Ibidem, fol. 181a.
 28. Ibidem, fol. 183b.
 29. Ibidem, fol. 184b.
 30. Ibidem, fols. 193a–193b.
 31. Ibidem, fol. 201b. It may be noted here that the juxtaposition of trickery and force was also central to Machiavelli. See, for instance, *Discourses on Livy*, Book II, Chapter 13 (Machiavelli, *The Chief Works*, Vol. I, 357–358).
 32. BC, Ms. 2015, fol. 205a.

33. Ibidem, fols. 209a–210a.
34. Ibidem, fols. 222b–223a.
35. H. Puigdomènec (1988), *Maquiavelo en España: Presencia de sus obras en los siglos XVI y XVII* (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española) and K.D. Howard (2014), *The Reception of Machiavelli in Early Modern Spain* (Woodbridge: Tamesis). See also R.A. Stradling (1988), *Philip IV and the Government of Spain, 1621–1665* (New Haven: Yale University Press): 11–22.
36. See C. Lowney (2005), *A Vanished World: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Medieval Spain* (New York: Oxford University Press): 139–141. A key work on the subject is Juan de Mariana, S.J., *Historia de rebus Hispaniae* (1592), which Xavier may or may not have known in India.
37. BC, Ms. 2015, fols. 126a–130a.
38. Ibidem, fol. 267a.
39. Ibidem, fol. 194a.
40. See G. Marcocci (2008), “Machiavelli, la religione dei romani e l’impero portoghese”, *Storica*, 14, nos. 41–42, 35–68.
41. Erasmus of Rotterdam (1997), *The Education of a Christian Prince*, trans. N.M. Cheshire and M.J. Heath, ed. L. Jardine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). Also see the useful comparative discussion in T. Hampton (1990), *Writing from History: The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press).
42. We may compare Xavier’s approach to that of M. Ricci (2009), *On Friendship (Jiaoyou lun): One Hundred Maxims for a Chinese Prince*, trans. T. Billings (New York: Columbia University Press).
43. See V. Narayana Rao and S. Subrahmanyam (2008), “An Elegy for *Nīti*: Politics as a Secular Discursive Field in the Indian Old Régime”, *Common Knowledge*, 14, no. 3, 396–423.

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Machiavelli, the Iberian Explorations and the Islamic Empire: Tropical Readers from Brazil to India (Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries)

Giuseppe Marcocci

Scholarly tradition has given us a detailed account of influence of Niccolò Machiavelli's works in the two centuries following their publication, making of them one of the great symbols of the confrontation between power and religion in early modern Europe. The readings of *The Prince* and of other of Machiavelli's writings have been investigated in very different cultural and confessional contexts, tracking how they circulated through a less than impenetrable censorship, hidden quotations and references to them, and other techniques of dissimulation.¹ In recent years, Carlo Ginzburg has indicated a new path, showing how the comparison between moderns and ancients—the Romans, above all—that is at the center of Machiavelli's thought was the origin of a specific trend in comparing customs and religions, particularly among some Renaissance antiquarians.² Ginzburg pays special attention to the indigenous peoples of the Americas, and rightly. This chapter, too, looks at the New World and, more generally, Machiavelli's importance for sixteenth-century

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thought on Iberian explorations, but to show how the outcomes of this attitude were much more general: one of the most recurrent characteristics in the early readings of Machiavelli are the recovery and developments of the brief comments on the Ottoman Empire in his writings.³

One may, indeed, suppose that, if the circulation of Machiavelli's work already had a global reach in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this was largely due to his observations on the "Turk" and their application to the other great Islamic empires of the time. That is why this chapter will explore, above all, some effects of Machiavelli's thought on the colonies and the empire building that, despite the (more or less early) rebuttals and bans, contributed to making him a significant author in the Iberian world. I shall therefore be concentrating on two surprising tropical readers of the *Discourses on Livy* and *The Prince*—two Italians (one a Florentine and the other a Venetian). From mid-sixteenth-century Brazil and early-eighteenth-century northern India respectively, they put us in touch with hitherto-unknown fragments of the exchange between the Islamic world and Machiavelli's writings—an exchange that was much richer than is suggested by the conventional Eurocentric image of Machiavelli as one of the founders of modern political thought.

MACHIAVELLI, ANCIENT ROME AND A NEW AGE OF EMPIRES

In November 1502, while in Imola on a diplomatic mission to Cesare Borgia on behalf of the Florentine Republic, Machiavelli learnt from "a letter from Venice", which was shown him by Gabriello da Bergamo, who was a post master, "that they have news (*nuove*) there of the return to Portugal from Calicut (*Galigutte*) of four caravels laden with spices. This news", he added, "had caused a great drop in the price of their spices, which was a very serious loss to that city".⁴ Machiavelli was, then, aware of important events involving Iberian explorations, particularly those that might have economic repercussions on Italian communities. One of these was the damage done by the Portuguese to Venice's role in the spice trade from Asia, which was a delicate and much-discussed subject in the early sixteenth century. Yet, in his political writings, Machiavelli never hints at this question, nor at other aspects connected with the sudden broadening of the perspectives of European culture in an age marked by the voyages of Columbus and Vasco da Gama.

One might, following in the footsteps of John Elliott's classic study, merely note that Machiavelli fully shared a widespread attitude in the

culture of the Old World, which required decades to absorb and articulate the discovery of the New.⁵ But the point is not so much Machiavelli's silence on America or Portuguese Asia. His works that are so alert to the underlying dynamics of an age of political change, which was moving from clashes between cities or regions to the success of the great monarchies on the European scene, simply do not focus on the genesis of a new political form such as the transoceanic empires of Portugal and Spain.⁶ His own experience was completely different, and during his most fertile period as a writer in the 1510s and 1520s, it would not have been easy for him to acquire detailed reliable information, not so much on the voyages, but on the actual political configurations that the Iberians were then setting up across the globe.

Nevertheless, Machiavelli's works contain passages and reflections that could not, for the most varied reasons, leave indifferent readers who were interested in Portugal's and Spain's global empire building. On various occasions, however, these powers were and would continue to be described by comparison with the model of the Roman Empire. And it is precisely through the events of ancient Rome that Machiavelli works out what we might identify as a colonial doctrine. They are expressed in the form of scattered comments, but Machiavelli explicitly states that a single thread links these hints in Chapter 1 of Book II of the *Discourses*, where, evoking "the method used by the Roman people in entering into the lands of others", he refers to the "tractate *On Princedoms*" in which "this matter is amply discussed".⁷ The reference is to Chapter 3 of *The Prince*, where the question is tackled in relation to "mixed princedoms"—so-called because they had been enlarged by a "recent conquest".⁸ In this chapter, Machiavelli discusses examples both ancient and modern, including that of the Ottoman Empire, confirming the fact that on this question too his reflections were considered a lesson for current affairs.

When the conquered province is "different in language, customs and institutions"—as was the case for the Iberian possessions in south Asia and America—their new ruler, writes Machiavelli, has two ways to avoid losing it. The ruler can either establish himself there physically, "as it has done for the Turk in Greece", since "if he had not gone to Greece to dwell, he could not possibly have held her", or "send colonies into one or two places to be like fetters for that state [of the new lord], because a prince must either do this or keep there many men-at-arms and infantry".⁹ Machiavelli has no doubt which to choose, between a light colonial presence and a dominion founded on a heavy presence of military

garrisons in the subject lands, as we see from a passage in Chapter 19 of Book II of the *Discourses*, dealing with the “true way to give greatness to a republic and to gain power (*imperio*)”:

(...) to increase the inhabitants of their city, to get for themselves associates and not subjects, to send colonies to guard countries conquered, to make capital of the spoil, to overcome the enemy with raids and battles and not with sieges, to keep the treasury rich, the individual poor, to support military training with the utmost zeal.¹⁰

The strategy described here refers to an economic principle also expressed in Chapter 6 of Book II of the *Discourses* (“both in the gaining and in the keeping, take care not to spend, but rather to do everything to the profit of the public”), and already analysed in Chapter 3 of *The Prince*:

On colonies a prince does not spend much, so without expense to him or with but little he sends them and keeps them there. He damages only those inhabitants (and they are unimportant in that state) whose fields and houses he confiscates to make provision for the colonists. Moreover, those damaged, being scattered and poor, never can harm him: all the rest on the one hand are undamaged (hence are likely to be quiet) and on the other hand are in terror of making some mistake, and therefore like those whose property has been confiscated. I conclude that such colonies are not expensive, are more loyal than a garrison and cause less damage.¹¹

Profoundly unlike what the Spanish were to set up in America, the type of colonial empire Machiavelli seems to have in mind, based on containing military expenditure, reveals some similarities with what the Portuguese—adapting to variable circumstances and power relations—were then founding from north Africa to southeast Asia. This is the framework in which, in opposition to the prevailing line, the aged Vasco da Gama would come to a favourable view of a light imperial structure, aimed at protecting the private interests of traders and costing the Crown little. As Duke Jaime of Bragança recalled in 1529, Gama’s “vote” was that Malacca, Hormuz “and all the other fortresses in India should be levelled, except Goa and Cochin”, and that the Moroccan strongholds of Ceuta, Ksar el-Seghir, Tangier and Asilah be ceded to the Emperor Charles V (r. 1516–1556), keeping only Azemmour and Safi, “for which a means could be found to support them very easily and honourably, and

they would cost very little money, and profit (*proveito*) could come from them to the kingdom [Portugal]”.¹²

I am not suggesting an influence of the contemporary writings of Machiavelli, which were still unpublished when these positions were formulated. But the Duke of Bragança, who died the same year that the Roman printer Antonio Blado brought out the first edition of *The Prince* (1532), would very probably have shared the ideas in Chapter 3 on the uselessness of military garrisons “in a conquered land”, because “[the prince] spends more by far, since he uses up the income from that state in holding it; thus his gain becomes a loss”.¹³ The mistrust for this option is accompanied by the suggestion, advanced in Chapter 1 of Book II of the *Discourses*, “to have in a new province some friends who would be a ladder or a gate for them to climb there or go in there, or a means by which to hold it”, to ensure “supports with which they could make their undertakings easy, both in gaining their provinces and in holding them. Those people who are careful about this”, concludes Machiavelli, “seem to have less need of Fortune than those who do not observe it well”.¹⁴

“AS IN OUR TIME THE TURK DOES”: COMPETING FOR THE ROMAN LEGACY

The importance of the colonies for Roman “greatness” leads Machiavelli to almost always refer to them when providing concrete examples. If the Ottoman Empire is not included in this model, but presented as the exact opposite, Machiavelli’s pages on the Turk are muffled by an ambiguity that did not escape his readers. Of course, fear of the Ottoman Empire’s increasing power in the Mediterranean—a widespread topic in Italian culture after the occupation of Otranto (1480)—is reflected in some passages of Machiavelli’s literary works, particularly the irreverent comedy *Mandragola*, in which a woman who asks “Do you believe the Turk is coming over into Italy this year?”, being “so afraid of that impaling”, receives a sarcastic answer from Frate Timoteo: “Yes, if you don’t say your prayers”.¹⁵ Other writings, by contrast, recognise the political and military features of the Ottoman Empire as commensurable with those of any other European power. In the celebrated passages of Chapter 4 of *The Prince* on the comparison between the “monarchy of the Turk” and the Kingdom of France, the former, introduced by an eloquent reference to Alexander the Great’s conquests in Asia, is described as the mirror image of the other, because it “is governed by one ruler;

the others are his servants; dividing his kingdom into sanjaks, he sends them various administrators, and changes and varies these as he likes".¹⁶

If Machiavelli describes a vertical model of empire, in which all the officials were "slaves and bound" to the sultan, he also gives some attention to Ottoman expansion, which, as we have seen, was based on vast military occupations that had first subdued the whole Anatolian peninsula until the fall of Constantinople (1453), and then expanded through the eastern Mediterranean. Machiavelli mentions Mehmed II (r. 1444–1446; 1451–1481) and Bāyezīd II (r. 1481–1512), but he is, above all, attracted by the expeditions of Selīm I (r. 1512–1520) against Safavid Persia, culminating in the victorious Battle of Chaldiran (1514), and against the Mamluk Sultanate, which collapsed under the double blow of the Turkish conquest of Syria (1516) and Egypt (1517). However, he does not give way to simple-minded extolling of Ottoman power. For example, in a passage in Chapter 35 of Book III of the *Discourses*, he recalls the hardships suffered by the Turks during the invasion of Persia on "coming to a very level region, where there are many deserts and few streams"—according to what "some say who come from his land"—as a warning against following the advice of others in grand, daring actions.¹⁷

This episode allows Machiavelli to draw a parallel with "the difficulties that long ago caused the ruin of many Roman armies" against the Parthians, which reflects a more general comparison that is also advanced elsewhere in the *Discourses*. Reading between the lines, we can glimpse the hypothesis that the Turks were the heirs of the ancient military valour of the Romans, consistently with the idea expressed in the Preface to Book II: "if the Roman Empire was not succeeded by any empire that lasted and kept together the world's excellence (*virtù*)", this excellence was, nevertheless, distributed between various powers, "such as the kingdom of the French, the kingdom of the Turks, and that of the Soldan, and today the people of Germany, and earlier that Saracen tribe that did such great things and took so much of the world after it destroyed the Eastern Roman Empire".¹⁸

In Machiavelli's eyes, then, the Islamic world is a privileged space for the emergence of political powers able to compete for the legacy of ancient Rome's imperial greatness. That this was so for the Ottoman Empire, at least in their *virtù* in arms, can be deduced from an eloquent judgment at the opening of Chapter 30 of Book I, concerning the direct involvement of Selīm I in the military campaigns:

A prince, in order to escape the necessity of living in fear or of being ungrateful, should go personally on his campaigns, as at first the Roman emperors did, as in our times the Turk does, and as prudent rulers always have done and now do. Because, if they conquer, the glory and the gain are all theirs, but when they are not present, since the glory goes to another man, they think they cannot enjoy the gain if they do not destroy for the winner such glory as they have not been wise enough to gain for themselves.¹⁹

Evoking the glory achieved through courage in war as a factor of civic cohesion (“they cannot enjoy the gain if they do not destroy for the winner such glory”), sounds like an indirect reference to the famous Chapter 2 of Book II of the *Discourses* on the “difference between our religion and the ancient”. In Rome, the ancient religion “attributed blessedness only to men abounding in worldly glory, such as generals of armies and princes of states”, while Christianity, “because it shows us the truth and the true way, makes us esteem less the honor of the world”, weakening souls and encouraging the “worthlessness of men, who have interpreted our religion according to sloth and not according to vigor (*virtù*)”.²⁰

Machiavelli does not write that the religion of Islam exhorts its followers to bravery in battle, but his idea that it was precisely on the military plane that the Ottomans were the new Romans was repeated by the humanist Paolo Giovio in his *Commentario delle cose de' turchi*, published in 1532 by Antonio Blado, who had brought out the first edition of the *Discourses* the previous year. “Military discipline is regulated with such justice and severity by the Turks”, writes Giovio, “that we may say that theirs surpasses that of the ancient Greeks and the Romans”, thus making them “better than our soldiers”.²¹ As Adriano Prosperi was the first to note, what aroused the strongest reactions to Machiavelli’s writings, at first, were the pages of the *Discourses* on ancient religion, but their destabilising effect was increased by the association with Giovio’s unequivocal judgment.²² Instead of the description of the “monarchy of the Turk” contained in *The Prince*, it was the few comments by Machiavelli on the military valour of the Ottomans that set off a passionate debate on religion and war. The question was a delicate one at a time when the Iberian powers had been trying to establish themselves as global empires in the name of Christian primacy—but also against Islam—as well as containing the Turkish advance in the Mediterranean.

The first to intervene was the Spanish humanist Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, who had discussed Machiavelli’s ideas in depth during his

period at the College of Spain in Bologna. In 1535, the year of the conquest of Tunis by an army led by Charles V in person, Blado published the dialogue *Democrates primus*, in which Sepúlveda, who makes various references to the military comparison with the Turks, tries to overturn the judgment of Machiavelli (and Giovio). He claims that the “many wars (*multa bella*)” fought by the Iberians “against the godless Saracens (*cum impiis Saracenis*)” from the *Reconquista* on, showed that the Christian religion was perfectly compatible with “military discipline (*militaris disciplina*)”—Giovio’s expression, which is even evoked in the title of Sepúlveda’s work—providing the foundations for a “just and legitimate empire (*iusti ac legitimi imperii*)”.²³

Three years later, the Portuguese Cistercian monk Diogo de Castilho published in Leuven in Flanders a *Livro da Origem dos Turcos*, dedicated to the rich merchant Manuel Cirne, who was in charge of the Portuguese trading agency (*feitoria*) in Antwerp, which re-sold in Europe goods coming from the empire. Addressed to the Portuguese “people (*povo*)”, and particularly to those who were to follow Charles V in a crusade to reconquer Constantinople, the *Livro* warns against the risks of a war against the Turk. This takes up the words of Giovio—Castilho’s main source—on the valour of the Ottoman soldiers (“they seem to surpass the ancient Greeks and Romans”), in contrast with the imperial rhetoric that insisted rather on the Portuguese surpassing the ancients. Castilho corroborates his judgment in a passage that is taken from the *Omnium gentium mores, leges et ritus* (1520) by the Bavarian humanist Hans Böhm (Joannes Boemus)—an encyclopaedia of the customs of the peoples of the world, which enjoyed a veritable publishing boom throughout Europe in the years after 1535. But it could also be read as an extension to Islam of Machiavelli’s position on the religion of the Romans:

(...) Turkish soldiers are better than our own (...) as they think it happier to die among their enemies than at home among tears and weeping from wives and children, and at all meals and meetings pray for their men of arms, and above all for those who perished for the good of their country, and write the feats of their ancestors, which they then sing and praise, firing the spirits of the soldiers greatly.²⁴

Castilho may have been linked to a network at the court of King John III of Portugal (r. 1521–1557) that was pressing for decisive military action against Ottoman power, whose fleets were now a threatening

presence in the Indian Ocean and had even intervened on behalf of the Sultanate of Gujarat during the disastrous siege of the Portuguese fortress at Diu in 1538.²⁵ This pressure group was guided by the infante Luís, who had taken part in the Tunis expedition. In 1542 he was the dedicatee of the most vehement reply to Machiavelli to appear in the years following the publication of *The Prince* and the *Discourses*, written by the Portuguese humanist Jerónimo Osório, who had also resided at the College of Spain in Bologna at the time of Sepúlveda. In *De nobilitate civilis et Christiana*, Osório reaffirms the military valour of Christian soldiers, whose faith in eternal life made them invincible, removing any fear of death. His open criticism is made ambiguous by the use of arguments taken from Machiavelli's own works to confute him, foreshadowing the veiled approval shown in later works—for example, *De regis institutione et disciplina* (1572), in which, just after the Battle of Lepanto, he also expressed positive judgments on the Ottoman and Safavid empires.²⁶ The final section of *De nobilitate* rejects the superiority of the religion of the Romans over Christianity and takes up the theme of a planetary war against the Muslims, to be waged by the Portuguese, who most embodied the warlike virtues of true Christian nobility, and whose victories had conferred a sacred character on their empire, which had now subjected an “infinite multitude of foreign peoples (*infinitamque alienigenarum multitudinem*)”.²⁷

What Osório may not have known when he published *De nobilitate* was that a somewhat different connection between the pages of Machiavelli on the religion of the Romans and the Portuguese Empire had been suggested a few years earlier. The humanist João de Barros delivered a eulogy of John III at Évora in the presence of the court in 1533. We have a manuscript copy of the speech full of citations and paraphrases of passages from *The Prince* and the *Discourses*.²⁸ It shows how quickly editions of Machiavelli were circulating in the Iberian Peninsula. Barros would later compose the first official chronicle of the Portuguese conquests in Asia, sub-divided by decades in the manner of Livy. One of the passages in the *Discourses* that struck him was that where Machiavelli describes Numa Pompilius as the king who had given solid foundations to Roman society by turning “to religion”, and observes that “where there is religion, it is easy to bring in arms” (Book I, Chapter 11).²⁹ Barros adds, however, that the “attention (*cuidado*)” with which the Romans observed “their false religion (*sua falsa religião*)” suggested that “they would have been more observant of the true religion, if they had

known of it (*mais devotos foram da verdadeira, se della teverão conhecimento*)”.³⁰ Hence the attempt to harmonise that model with the feats of the Portuguese: “if the religion of the Gentiles, which is censured and false, had the power to cause such perfection in those who followed it, setting aside vices and encouraging cleanliness of the spirit, how much more should we expect this from the true faith in Christ?”³¹

His sharing Machiavelli’s interpretation of Rome’s imperial greatness even leads Barros to repeat almost word for word the passage from the *Discourses* that has already been cited on the “true way to give greatness to a republic and to gain power”, or “the paths to conquest (*os caminhos pera conquistar*)”, as we can see from his oration:

Do not oppress too much the conquered, order the vassals and natives to go and live in the lands acquired (and the Romans called those settlements colonies) treasure the spoils, wear down the enemy with charges, incursions and pitched battles, and do not make agreements, keep the state rich and the conquered poor, give all power to the captains as the Romans did, keeping for yourself only the power to wage another war, and so keep with much diligence the armies and the soldiery.³²

The complexity of Barros’ eulogy emerges in all its implications if we consider that his oration contains praise for the Ottoman Empire, whose system of justice is celebrated as a legacy of the Eastern Roman Empire.³³ Positively or negatively, Machiavelli changed forever how to look at the Islamic powers in the Iberian world.³⁴

THINKING OF THE OTTOMAN “GREAT LORD” FROM THE NEW WORLD

In the same year that he gave the eulogy to John III, João de Barros began directing the *Casa da Índia*, a sort of ministry of trade with Asia, the part of the Portuguese Empire with which his name remained tied for posterity. Meanwhile, however, Barros was involved shortly after in organising an expedition to Brazil, which the Portuguese had not yet begun to colonise in any significant way. This initiative was certainly a response to the threat to Portugal’s imperial interests from the settlements that some French explorers, with the consent of their Crown, had established along the Brazilian coast. The words pronounced by Barros, under the influence of his early reading of Machiavelli, might belong to

the debate that must have accompanied John III's decision to change strategy over the possessions in the New World. In a letter of 1533, the king wrote to one of his ministers that he did not want to "send people, or anything else, to Brazil, until a decision has been taken on what is needed to populate that land and make it safe, which, if our Lord is willing, will soon happen".³⁵

In fact, in 1534 the Portuguese Crown began its first difficult campaign of colonial penetration in Brazil, dividing up the coast in twelve hereditary captaincies, each entrusted to a donee with full powers, who in turn had to meet all the costs of the enterprise. The model applied on a vast scale the seigniorial system of late-medieval Portugal, also entailing the faculty of giving land to colonists in exchange for their duty to cultivate it.³⁶ This project of extending the empire, based on savings for the Crown and on the profit that could be extracted from work in the fields, recalls the Roman pattern as described by Machiavelli. In Chapter 3 of *The Prince* he recommends "send[ing] colonies", partly so as "not [to] allow influence there to be grasped by powerful foreigners"—the French, in the case of Brazil—and, in Chapter 6 of Book II of the *Discourses*, he underlines that the colonies "became a guard of the Roman boundaries, with profit to the colonists who received those fields and with profit to the Roman public, which without expense kept up this garrison".³⁷

The passages just cited do not appear in Barros' oration, but may have contributed to inducing him to invest in the Brazilian adventure, obtaining the concession of a stretch of coast from the Rio Grande to Maranhão. The undertaking lasted from 1535 to 1536, but was a fiasco, from which Barros emerged heavily indebted.³⁸ The whole operation proved, in any case, to be a limited success. Only in the captaincies of Pernambuco and São Vicente were there satisfactory results, and more than a decade had to pass before the Portuguese Crown instituted a central governorship (1549), based in Salvador da Bahia, and committed itself with men and means to colonise Brazil, though no further than the coast. Partly due to the armed resistance of the indigenous people, it remained a secondary front for a whole century, as the Portuguese Empire's barycenter was still in south Asia.

In this context of great uncertainty and insecurity, there was no shortage of foreigners who, under license of the Portuguese Crown, tried their fortune in Brazil. These included various Tuscan subjects, whose presence was to contribute to developing in the court of the Grand Duke

Ferdinand I de' Medici (r. 1587–1609) a failed colonisation project in the Brazilian captaincy of Espírito Santo in the early seventeenth century, as well as an expedition along the Rio of the Amazons.³⁹ Before then, a good number of engineers and Florentine merchants' agents had reached Portuguese America. Among those who successfully settled there was Raffaele Olivi. His story is known to us in part because he was one of the first settlers to be tried by the Portuguese Inquisition in the New World. In February 1574 he was arrested in his estate in São João, not far from the small town of São Jorge de Ilhéus, a few hundred kilometers south of Salvador da Bahia. Olivi had been living there for years after long serving the trading interests of the owner of the local captaincy, Luca Giraldi, a powerful Florentine banker and the principal creditor of the Crown of Portugal, where he had long been living and where he had ties with the Gama family through his daughter's marriage to one of Vasco's nephews.⁴⁰

Olivi was accused of making various suspicious claims: these included that "religion had been invented to subject people and the population at large", and that "the Turks certainly lived well" because "they had no obligation to go to mass, or to accept the sacraments". These were dangerous words, especially if pronounced freely in the presence of others. Olivi was now a rich and respected landowner, as well as sufficiently educated to back up his ideas: he knew Latin, he was said to have studied philosophy, and, above all, he owned various books. The impious opinions he sustained included the suggestion that "above the heights of the empyrean there was another universe like this, where there was earth and water and other elements like these and other peoples". In addition, he had suggested calling the Ottoman Sultan "great lord" as a mark of respect, for his power and the many lands he had subjugated.⁴¹

These were surprising judgments, considering the latitude where they were formed, but perhaps not so very much, if we bear in mind that they were formulated by the oldest reader of Machiavelli in the New World known to the sources. Among the books found in Olivi's house when he was taken prisoner were works of ancient and modern literature, history, politics and science, but also a copy of the *Discourses*, a work that was then on the *Index of Prohibited Books* in Portugal. Worse still: there was also a copy of Giovio's *Commentario*, the work that had transformed the idea of the Ottomans as modern heirs of the ancient Romans, which Machiavelli had barely hinted at, in a laconic remark that had created scandal and debate in Europe. Olivi's insistence on the superiority of the Turks, as well as his conducting a life contrary to Christian morals

(as could be seen in his behaviour—the chapel in his estate, for example, had become a meeting-place for sexual encounters between slaves) show, perhaps, the most extreme features of a tropical reader of the works of Machiavelli and Giovio, who dreamt of being able to rebuild in Brazil a corner of the Ottoman world he had idealised.⁴²

This episode does not only show one of the many surprising links between the Islamic world and sixteenth-century America, which has already been brought out by other scholars.⁴³ It confirms, rather, an association between the Ottoman Empire and the early reading of Machiavelli connected to Brazil, which can also be seen in *Les singularitez de la France antarctique* (1557) by the Franciscan friar André Thévet, written on his return from the colony that the French had set up in mid-century, in the site of the future Rio de Janeiro. Consider the pages on the wars carried out by the Tupinambá people, who were described most strikingly by another protagonist of this experience, the Calvinist Jean de Léry, himself a reader of Machiavelli, who is openly cited in his *Histoire d'un voyage faict en la terre du Brésil* (1578). A possible reader of the French translation of the *Discourses* by Jacques Gohory, printed in 1544, Thévet often mentions Livy and, just like Machiavelli, compares the customs of the ancients and those of modern non-Christian peoples, following a scale of well-defined values, however: “it is a strange thing that these Americans do never make amongst them any paction or concorde, though that their hatred be great, as other nations do be they never so cruel and barbarous, as the Turkes, Moores and Arabians”. And, a few pages later, after indicating the exhibition of courage—sometimes through cries and frivolous threats—as the cause of the constant wars between the Tupinambá people, he comments:

In this they observe (in my iudgement) the ancient custome that the Romaynes used in their warres, who before they entred into battell made greate boastes and crakes, with greate cryes and larums, the which since hath bene used among the Galles in their warres, as Titus Livius reharseth.⁴⁴

The tendency to describe the indigenous peoples of the Americas using a comparative method, which is partly influenced by the circulation of Machiavelli, saw further developments in the following decades. Meanwhile, however, the *Discourses* provide a further example of Machiavelli’s influence in the New World: during an inspection in the

Mexican diocese of the Yucatan in 1585, a copy of the work was seized, shortly after it had been put on the *Index* in Spain (1583–1584). There seems to have been a remarkable circulation of Machiavellian and anti-Machiavellian writings and themes in the American territories of the Spanish and Portuguese empires in the two centuries that followed. In the main, it reflected the dynamics that were then registered in the Iberian peninsula, starting from a growing interest in *The Prince*, which contributed to modelling the political culture of the Iberian elites that were either born or came to live in the New World in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.⁴⁵

LIVING AT THE COURT OF A MACHIAVELLIAN EMPIRE

Another direction of Machiavelli's global circulation in the early modern period was that which led from the Iberian Peninsula to south Asia. At first, men and books travelled along the routes of the Portuguese navigations. The municipal councillors of Chaul, a city on the north-west coast of India, may have been inspired, directly or indirectly, by Machiavelli when they responded to the request for help from the governor of Portuguese Asia, João de Castro (g. 1545–1548), against the Sultan of Bijapur. They not only accepted his request, but extolled Castro, a veteran of the Tunis expedition (1535), as another Scipio Africanus, who was one of the models indicated in Chapter 11 of Book I of the *Discourses* as continuing the example of Numa Pompilius, and had also been recalled through literary citations by João de Barros in his oration di John III.⁴⁶

Later, in the 1580s, Machiavelli's writings would serve the Florentine merchant Filippo Sassetti as a guide in describing to his correspondents the customs of the inhabitants of Portuguese India. For Sassetti, like many of his fellow-citizens, the reading of *The Prince* and the *Discourses*, though forbidden, was an obligatory part of their humanist training. The echo of a passage on the sacrifice of the Roman consul Publius Decius (341 BCE) in Chapter 16 of Book II of the *Discourses* is clear, for example, in the portrait Sassetti makes of the military temperament of the “Indians” in a letter written from Cochin, in January 1584, to his friend Pietro Spina:

They are all a warlike people and when their captain or king dies in battle, they are obliged to die by will of their lord: and these people who are now destined to die are called *amocchi*, and the more of them a king has, the more powerful he is, because, when obliged to fight a war, he sends to die

against the enemies some of these people, as he pleases, who, not wanting to die without revenge, and having to die at all costs are most extremely violent. Similar to this way of behaving, at least in the intention, was a sacrifice of himself that one of the Roman consuls made in the war with the Latins, while his wing [of the army] was already retreating from the battlefield.⁴⁷

Meanwhile, with the passage of time, more and more attention was given to *The Prince*, as is already clear in the echoes of Machiavelli's dedicatory letter to Lorenzo de' Medici in a treatise written in Persian at the court of the Mughal emperor Jahangir (r. 1605–1627) by the Jesuit Jerónimo Xavier.⁴⁸ An indirect trace of this increasing interest for *The Prince* can also be found in a collection of aphorisms clearly modelled on Tacitus, presented as if taken from the chronicle of Portuguese Asia by João de Barros, and published in Lisbon in 1621. Its author, Fernando Alvia de Castro, was a magistrate of Castilian origin, who, in the context of the dynastic union between the two Iberian crowns (1580–1640), was then serving as General Superintendent of the armed and naval forces in Portugal. The proposal of an unheard-of but telling association between Scipio Africanus and Vasco da Gama, the idea that pacts and alliances were worth less than the threat of brute force, or the suggestion to "dissimulate trickery (*dissimular engaños*)" can be seen as signs of a possibly attenuated but still substantial Machiavellianism, similar to the loss of reputation by Asian rulers being indicated as a possible explanation of their supposed decadence. Alvia de Castro writes: "A new prince should not boast of the favor he enjoys and the success he obtains to the point of losing all esteem for his neighbouring kings and proceeding harshly, because this will certainly bring his downfall".⁴⁹

Though no longer enjoying the subversive charge they aroused in the central decades of the sixteenth century, such attestations show how popular Machiavelli's works were becoming as a tool for interpreting or judging even the complex political situations of south Asia. In an age when the Safavid and Mughal powers were pressing upon that part of the world, it was predictable that the question of the Islamic empire emerged in the way it had been treated by Machiavelli in *The Prince* with reference to the "monarchy of the Turk", in terms that were somewhat different from how the Florentine Olivi had described it from Brazil.

It was another Italian who suggested a direct link with Machiavelli. We do not know exactly when and where the Venetian Nicolò Manuzzi

read his works. Manuzzi was an enigmatic figure who lived in India for almost 70 years, from the mid-seventeenth century until his death around 1720. He combined activity as a doctor at the Mughal court in Lahore with his role as an agent of the European powers (Portugal, France and Britain) in their enclaves. He also composed an original historical-descriptive work on the Mughal Empire at the time of the powerful ruler Aurangzeb (r. 1658–1707): entitled *Storia del Mogol*, it had a complex textual history, and to this day there is still no critical edition that describes its stratifications.⁵⁰

Power politics and military customs—and, still more, the intrigues that he noted during his stay at the Mughal court—induced Manuzzi to include references to Machiavelli, which were probably recollections of a possibly distant reading of *The Prince*, to interpret the attitudes and inclinations of emperors and princes. This use is combined with genuine admiration for the Mughals' power, which, in a late draft of the *Storia del Mogol* becomes a warning about European presumption: “the Europeans should not think”, Manuzzi writes at the outset of the third part of the work, as it has reached us in the manuscripts in Venice's Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, “that there is grandeur and wealth only in Europe and that grandeur reigns only at the court of Savoy, France, Spain and Germany, because I assure my readers that no one will live with more grandeur, pomp and majesty than the Mughal kings, nor can their wealth be compared with that of these lords of the Indies”.⁵¹

Aurangzeb is, in turn, presented as a ruler who was able to conquer power by calculation, cunning and trickery, without sparing his dearest ties. This follows a tradition that Machiavelli does not describe, although he mentions in *The Prince* that Ottoman power was wholly concentrated in the “prince's family (*sangue del Principe*)” (Chapter 4) and that the sultan was forced to always keep “around him twelve thousand infantry and fifteen thousand cavalry, on whom depend the security and strength of his kingdom” (Chapter 19).⁵² Manuzzi, however, seems to spell out clearly what Machiavelli avoids. Thus, he recalls that Aurangzeb was seen as a “tyrant (*tiranno*)”, although he wanted to “acquire a reputation for fairness (*acquistar nome di giusto*)”.⁵³ There emerges a portrait of a ruler who “with pity and justice was always able to reward and punish the obedient and disobedient”, which recalls the subjects of the Turk, who are described as “servants” by Machiavelli in *The Prince*. Manuzzi also underlines “the special energy of his self-control, without which the

Crown of his kingdom could not have been preserved against the will of so many malcontents, above all his own sons, of whom he is more suspicious than of anyone else".⁵⁴ It is no surprise, then, that, in the oldest version of the *Storia del Mogol* that has come down to us, and which is now in the *Staatsbibliothek* in Berlin, Aurangzeb is directly mentioned as "that Machiavelli".⁵⁵ And, referring to the treatment meted out to the subjects of Hindu or Islamic powers that had made their conquest easier, and whom Aurangzeb dismissed as traitors, "while he has promoted their descendants in the hope of gaining their friendship and affections", Manuzzi recalls that the Mughal Emperor "knows, as says Machiavelli, that he who desires to obliterate injuries past and done cannot resort to a more effective medicine than the prescribing of silver".⁵⁶ The quotation here is not literal, but seems to re-express an idea in Chapter 3 of *The Prince*, which advises that "you cannot retain as friends those who put you there, since you cannot give them such satisfaction as they looked forward to, and since you cannot use strong medicines against them because you are indebted to them".⁵⁷

Therefore, Manuzzi is not just offering a vague echo of themes attributed to Machiavelli, an author he also openly refers to when writing of Aurangzeb's sons. It was the world he knew most closely, as, during his stay at the Mughal court, he had long been in the service of the eldest of them, Shāh Alam, who later became emperor with the name of Bahādur Shāh (r. 1707–1712):

The policy of these princes of the royal house of the Mogol is more than Macchiavelli's (*sic*) while they are in private, as they leave no way untried to be pleasing to the great men and the generals, to the court and to the kingdom. They seek to conquer their souls and the wish to have them on their side in time of necessity, and then in private they display only amenable, civil and courteous qualities, with much gallantry and urbanity, speaking and conversing familiarly with all; but all their familiarity aims only to entice the souls not only of the great, but also of the rabble.⁵⁸

Though Manuzzi does not quote any specific passage of *The Prince* here, the explicit mention of Machiavelli's name brings out how his writings had inspired so many of his readers to use comparisons in their writings. This encouraged an interchangeability of political connotations that made it possible, for example, to interpret the Mughal court in the light of the description of the Ottoman court as described by Machiavelli.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The sequence of readings, citations and reinterpretations in this chapter is still pretty fragmentary. But it is already enough to show that Machiavelli made a decisive contribution to shaping an image that was anything but compact and consistent, but, in the main, new, of the Islamic world and its empires. Reconstructing this influence forces us to follow many often diverging directions, which in part is due to the extension of geographical, cultural and political perspectives that were typical of the early modern world. A part of the European imperial elites—and not only in Iberia—shared a heritage of political culture that was nourished by an ambivalent, but powerful, relation with Machiavelli's writings. But, alongside it, there emerged a tradition that was easily identifiable despite the changes it went through. It was able to apply the *Discourses* or *The Prince* to a tropical context by re-directing or developing through other authors (Giovio in particular), the few remarks Machiavelli makes about the Ottoman Empire and the Islamic world, which were particularly striking for the comparisons with ancient Rome.

Reconstructing this tradition is all the more interesting as, so far as we know, though it did start there, it was certainly closely related to America, and to the colonisation of Brazil in particular. This is an unexpected thread in Machiavelli's influence that already in the early modern period abetted his varying circulation beyond the confines of Europe, and that was potentially global in its reach.

NOTES

1. G. Procacci (1995), *Machiavelli nella cultura europea dell'età moderna* (Rome and Bari: Laterza), and S. Anglo (2005), *Machiavelli, the First Century: Studies in Enthusiasm, Hostility and Irrelevance* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press).
2. C. Ginzburg (2011), "Machiavelli e gli antiquari", in: M. Donattini, G. Marcocci and S. Pastore (eds), *Per Adriano Proserpi*, 3 vols. (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale): Vol. II, 3–9, now republished in English translation in the present volume.
3. The importance of Machiavelli's works for European thought on the Ottoman Empire (particularly in Italy) has been shown in great detail by L. D'Ascia (2010), "L'impero machiavellico: L'immagine della Turchia nei trattatisti italiani del Cinquecento e del primo Seicento", *Quaderns d'Italià*, 15, 99–116, to which should now be added the chapters by

- Vincenzo Lavenia and Pier Mattia Tommasino. None of this work, however, considers the echoes of this subject outside Europe.
4. Letter to the Florentine authorities, Imola, 16 November 1502, in N. Machiavelli (1989), *The Chief Works and Others*, ed. and trans. Allan Gilbert, 3 vols. (Durham and London; Duke University Press): Vol. I, 134–135.
 5. I refer, of course, to J.H. Elliott (1970), *The Old World and the New, 1492–1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
 6. M. Hornqvist (2004), *Machiavelli and Empire* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press), who suggests we reconsider *The Prince* and the *Discourses* as a reflection on an imperialist Florentine republicanism. Attributing the title of empire to every power that has been increased by conquest, seems, however, improper.
 7. Machiavelli, *The Chief Works*, Vol. I, 327.
 8. Ibidem, Vol. I, 12.
 9. Ibidem, Vol. I, 14.
 10. Ibidem, Vol. I, 378.
 11. Ibidem, Vol. I, 341 (*Discourses*) and 14–15 (*The Prince*), respectively.
 12. Letter to King John III of Portugal, 12 February 1529. I quote from the English translation provided by S. Subrahmanyam (1997), *The Career and Legend of Vasco da Gama* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press): 303. Note, however, that there are also similarities regarding the advisability of using fortresses, which was criticised by Machiavelli in *The Prince*, Chapter 20, and *Discourses*, Book II, Chapter 24. A rather different exercise has been tried in relation to the supposed similarities between Machiavelli and Afonso de Albuquerque, governor of India from 1509 to 1515. See Â. Barreto Xavier (2014), “‘A maior empresa que nunca um príncipe cristão teve nas mãos’: Conquistar e conservar territórios no Índico nos tempos de Maquiavel”, *Revista Tempo*, 20, 1–27.
 13. Machiavelli, *The Chief Works*, Vol. I, 15.
 14. Ibidem, Vol. I, 327.
 15. Ibidem, Vol. II, 880 (*Carnival Songs*) and 796 (*Mandragola*), respectively.
 16. Ibidem, Vol. I, 21.
 17. Ibidem, Vol. I, 508.
 18. Ibidem, Vol. I, 322. On this important passage see also J.M. Najemy (2009), “Machiavelli between East and West”, in: D. Ramada Curto et al. (eds), *From Florence to the Mediterranean and Beyond: Essays in Honour of Anthony Molho* (Florence: Olschki): 127–145: 133–134.
 19. Machiavelli, *The Chief Works*, Vol. I, 260.
 20. Ibidem, Vol. I, 331.

21. P. Giovio (2005), *Commentario de le cose de' turchi*, ed. L. Michelacci (Bologna: Clueb): 169: “La disciplina militar è con tanta giustitia et severità regulata da' turchi che si può dir che avanzino quella de gli antichi greci et romani”.
22. A. Prosperi (2010), “La religione, il potere, le élites: Incontri italo-spagnoli nell’età della Controriforma”, in his *Eresie e devozioni*, 3 vols. (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura): Vol. I, 61–85. On the main consequences in Italian and Spanish culture of the association between this idea of Machiavelli’s and Giovio’s *Commentario*, see now the chapter by Vincenzo Lavenia in this volume.
23. J.G. de Sepúlveda (1535), *De convenientia militaris disciplinae cum christiana religione dialogus, qui inscribitur Democrates* (Rome: Antonio Blado): fols. 25^r–25^v and 80^r, respectively. On this treatise, see A. Coroleu (1992), “Il *Democrats primus* di Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda: una nuova prima condanna contro il Machiavelli”, *Il Pensiero Politico*, 25, 263–268.
24. D. de Castilho (1538), *Livro da Origem dos Turcos* (Leuven: Rutger Rescius): fols. Yi^r–Yiⁱ: “Segundo diz Paulo Iovio, os Turcos guardaom ha ordem militar com tanta iustica he gravidade que sem duvida parece sobrepuiarem os antigos gregos e romaōs, ho que afirma Ioanne Aubano em ho livro segundo da sua Historeia, os quaes daom tres causas por que a gente militar turca e melhor que naō a nossa, (...) ha segunda porque naō temem nenhum manifesto perigo (...) por terem por mães bem aventurados aquelles que entre os imigos moreram, que naom hos que em suas casas emtre ho prantos he choros de suas molheres he filhos feneceraom, hem todos ho convites he aiuntamentos oraō pola gente de gerra mas principalmente por aquelles que polo proveito da comum patria feneceraom, os feitos de sues ante pasados escrevem os quaes depois cantaō he louvão, com ho que em grande maneira acende os animos da gente de gerra”. On Castilho and his work, see C. Bettini (2009–2015), “Frei Diogo de Castilho”, in: D. Thomas (ed.), *Christian–Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, 7 vols. (Leiden and Boston: Brill): Vol. VI, 328–331. For a general interpretation of Böhm’s treatise, see K.A. Vogel (1995), “Cultural Variety in a Renaissance Perspective: Johannes Boemus on ‘The Manners, Laws and Customs of All People’ (1520)”, in: H. Bugge and J.-P. Rubiés (eds), *Shifting Cultures: Interaction and Discourse in the Expansion of Europe* (Münster: Lit Verlag): 17–34.
25. The hypothesis is presented with valid arguments in a working paper by R.M. Loureiro (2013), *A Rare Sixteenth Century Imprint: The Livro da origem dos Turcos* (Portimão: ISMAT): 15–16.
26. Osório’s treatise was first noted in Prosperi, “La religione”, 76–78. On the author’s non-linear relation with Machiavelli, see Anglo, *Machiavelli*, 142–163.

27. J. Osório (1542), *De nobilitate civili libri duo: De nobilitate Christiana libri tres* (Lisbon: Luís Rodrigues): fols. 116r–118r (quotation at fols. 117v–118r).
28. On this manuscript and the many itineraries of the circulation of Machiavelli in Portugal, see G. Marcocci (2008), “Machiavelli, la religione dei romani e l’impero portoghese”, *Storica*, 14, nos. 41–42, 35–68.
29. Machiavelli, *The Chief Works*, Vol. I, 224. Compare this chapter with Lisbon, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal (henceforth BNP), cod. 3.060, J. de Barros, *Ao mui alto e muito poderoso Rey de Portugal D. João 3º deste nome*, fols. 39r–39v.
30. Ibidem, fols 37v–38v.
31. Ibidem, fol. 36v: “Se a religião dos gentios, reprovada e falsa tinha poder, pelo apartamento dos vícios e limpeza do espírito, de causar tanta perfeição a quem a seguia, quanto mais se deve isto esperar da verdadeira fé de Cristo?”. A similar conclusion seems to have been reached by J. Osório (1571 [1572]), *De regis institutione et disciplina* (Lisbon: João de Espanha): 212r, and, before him, as Carlo Ginzburg shows in his chapter in this volume, by Guillaume Du Choul nel *Discours de la region des anciens Romains* (1556).
32. BNP, cod. 3.060, fols. 100v–101r: “aos vencidos não dar muita opressão, mandar que os vassalos e naturais vão morar nas terras ganhadas, as quaes povoações os romãos chamavão colonias, dos despojos fazer tesouro, affadigar ao imigo com cavalgadas, entradas e batalhas campaes, e não concertos, ter rico o publico e pobres os vencidos, dar aos capitaes inteiro poder como faziam os romãos, não rezervando pera sy mais que o mover nova guerra, e assi manter com muita diligencia os exercitos e gente d’armas”. It should be added that Barros, like Machiavelli, also argues against fortresses in a passage that draws abundantly on Chapter 24 of Book II of the *Discourses*: see ibidem, fols. 55v–56r.
33. Ibidem, fols. 10v–11v.
34. See B. Fuchs (2009), *Exotic Nation: Maurophilia and the Construction of Early Modern Spain* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press), which underlines the solidity of pro-Turkish tendencies in Iberian culture, but without ever mentioning the connection with the circulation of Machiavelli and Giovio.
35. Letter to António de Ataíde, Count of Castanheira, Évora, 3 February 1533, published in J.D.M. Ford (ed.) (1933), *Letters of John III, King of Portugal, 1521–1557* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press): 83: “Eu averya por mais meu serviço nō mandar ao Brasyll gente, nem outra cousa, ate tomar asento no que deve de ir pera se a terra povoar e aseguurar, que, prazendo a Noso Senhor, sera cedo”.

36. H.B. Johnson (1972), “The Donatory Captaincy in Perspective: Portuguese Backgrounds to the Settlement of Brazil”, *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 52, 203–214, and A. Vasconcelos de Saldanha (2001), *As capitanias do Brasil: Antecedente, desenvolvimento e extinção de um fenômeno atlântico* (Lisbon: CNCDP): 95–105.
37. Machiavelli, *The Chief Works*, Vol. I, 16 (*The Prince*) and 342 (*Discourses*), respectively.
38. J. Couto (1996), “João de Barros e a estratégia lusitana de colonização do Brasil”, *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro*, 157, no. 391, 245–273.
39. R. Ridolfi (1962), “Pensieri medicei di colonizzare il Brasile”, *Il Veltro*, 6, 705–712, and S. Buarque de Holanda (2000), “Os projetos de colonização e comércio toscanos no Brasil ao tempo do Grão Duque Fernando I (1587–1609)”, *Revista de História*, 142–143, 95–122. Also see now B.A. Brege (2014), “The Empire that Wasn’t: the Grand Duchy of Tuscany and Empire, 1547–1609” (PhD Dissertation: Stanford University).
40. Olivi’s case is described, among others, by S.B. Schwartz (2008), *All Can Be Saved: Religious Tolerance and Salvation in the Iberian Atlantic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press): 182–183; on Giraldi, see V. Rau (1968), “Um grande mercador-banqueiro em Portugal: Lucas Giraldi”, in her *Estudos de História* (Lisbon: Verbo): 75–129.
41. Lisbon, Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (henceforth ANTT), Inquisição de Lisboa, Proc. no. 1682: “a religião fora emventada para sogaitar a gente he o povo” (fol. 2^v); “ouvio dizer ao dito Rafael Olivi que a vida dos turquos que era boa e louvalla pollas tais causas dizendo que ellas não obrigavão a missa nem a sacramentos” (fol. 2^r); “arriba das allturas do ceo jmpirio avia outro oniverso como este ando avia terra e agoa e outros alementos como estes e outras gentes” (fol. 5^v); “gram senhor” (fol. 3r). Interestingly, Jean Bodin uses the same expression, “Grand Signior” (*grand seigneur*) for the Ottoman sultan in Book III of *Les six livres de la République* (1576). I quote from the following English version: J. Bodin (1606), *The six bookes of a Common-weale*, trans. R. Knolles (London: Adam Islip and George Bishop): 263.
42. The list of books seized from Olivi can be read in ANTT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Proc. no. 1682, fols. 14^v–15^r. It includes “Comentari delas couisas de torquia” and “Discorsi di Nicolo”. The denunciations of Olivi were passed on to Lisbon, where the Inquisition absolved him.
43. S. Gruzinski (2010), *What Time Is There? America and Islam at the Dawn of Modern Times* (Cambridge and Malden, Mass.: Polity Press).
44. A. Thévet (1568), *The New Found Worlde, or Antarctike*, trans. T. Hackett (London: Henry Bynneman): fols. 57^r and 59^r, respectively.
45. D.A. Brading (1991), *The First America: The Spanish Monarchy, Creole Patriots, and the Liberal State, 1492–1867* (Cambridge and New York:

- Cambridge University Press) lists a series of cases for Spanish America. There is interesting new information on Brazil in the recent work by R. Bentes Monteiro and S. Bagno (eds) (2015), *Maquiavel no Brasil: Dos Descobrimentos ao século XXI* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Fundação Getúlio Vargas).
46. Letter dated 29 July 1547, published in E. Sanceau (ed.) (1973–1983), *Coleção de São Lourenço*, 3 vols. (Lisbon: Centro de Estudos Históricos Ultramarinos): Vol. III, 281–283. It also compares Castro with Furius Camillus, another figure to whom Machiavelli gives much space in the *Discourses*.
 47. F. Sassetti (1970), *Lettere da vari paesi, 1570–1588*, ed. V. Bramanti (Milan: Longanesi): 409: “Sono tutti gente di guerra e quando il loro capitano o re muore nella battaglia, sono obbligati a morire a volontà del lor signore: e chiamansi questi tali già destinati alla morte amocchi, e quel re che più ne tiene è più possente perché, stretto nella guerra, manda a morire contro ai nemici una banda di questa gente, qual pare a lui, i quali, non volendo morire senza vendetta, e avendo a morire a tutti i partiti fanno impeto terribile. Non fu dissimile a questo modo di fare, o almeno all'intenzione, un sacrificio che di se stesso fece uno de' consoli romani nella guerra de' latini, ritirandosi già il suo corno della battaglia”. This passage has already been noted by L. Biasiori (2013), “Comparaison comme estrangement: Machiavel, les anciens, les modernes, les sauvages”, *Essais. Revue interdisciplinaire d'humanités*, hors série no. 1, 151–169. For a discussion of the etymology and meaning of *amocchi*, see H. Yule and A.C. Burnell (2013), *Hobson-Jobson: The Definitive Glossary of British India*, ed. K. Teltscher (Oxford: Oxford University Press): 58–62.
 48. On this treatise, see the chapter by Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam in this book.
 49. F. Alvia de Castro (1621), *Aphorismos y exemplos políticos y militares: Sacados de la primera Decada de Iuan de Barros* (Lisbon: Pedro Creasbeeck): fol. 96^r: “Un principe nuevo no se ensoberbezca tanto con el favor que tiene, y buenos successos que alcança, que desestime a los reyes sus vezinos, y proceda con aspereza; que esto será causa de su ruyna”. The other quotation is taken from fol. 40^v.
 50. On Manuzzi and his work, see S. Subrahmanyam (2011), *Three Ways to Be Alien: Travails & Encounters in the Early Modern World* (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press): 133–172.
 51. N. Manuzzi (1986), *Storia del Mogol*, ed. P. Falchetta, 2 vols. (Milan: Franco Maria Ricci): Vol. II, 14: “né si giudichino gl'europei che le grandezze e ricchezze sijno solamente nell'Europa e che regnino le grandezze solamente nella corte di Savoia, Francia, Spagna e Alemania, ch'assicuro agli lettori che nissuno viverà con più grandezza, pompa e maiestà

ch'il re mogolo, né le ricchezze loro si possono ugualare a questi delle Indie". In a previous version, drafted in French and held in the Berlin Staatsbibliothek, the passage is slightly different. See N. Manuzzi (1907–1908), *Storia do Mogor, or, Mogul India, 1653–1708*, ed. and trans. W. Irvine, 4 vols. (London: John Murray): Vol. II, 330: "Most Europeans imagine that the grandeur of kings and princes in other parts of the world cannot compare with what is found at the courts of their sovereigns. Excluding the principal ones—those of the Emperor, the King of France, and the King of Spain—nowhere else can be found, as they think, those airs of grandeur and of majesty which follow in a sovereign train".

52. Machiavelli, *The Chief Works*, Vol. I, 22 and 75, respectively.
53. Manuzzi, *Storia del Mogol*, Vol. I, 162–163.
54. Ibidem, Vol. II, 13 and 76, respectively: "con pietà e con giustitia ha saputo e sa dare premij e castighi all'obbedienti e agli disobbedienti"; "particolar'industria con la quale si governò e si governa, senza la quale non si poteva conservare la corona del suo regno contro la volontà di tanti mal contenti e principalmente d'i suoi proij figlij, dagli quali dubita più che di nissun'altro".
55. Manuzzi, *Storia do Mogor*, Vol. I, 293.
56. Ibidem, Vol. III, 253–254. The passage seems out of its proper place in the account.
57. Machiavelli, *The Chief Works*, Vol. I, 13.
58. Manuzzi, *Storia del Mogol*, Vol. II, 88: "La politica di questi principi della casa reale del Mogol è più che di Macchiavelli mentre che sono privati, perché non lassano modo intentato per aggradare a gli grandi e generali, cossì della corte come del regno, procurando di cattivargli l'animo e la volontà per haverli in tempo di necessità della loro parte, e poi privatamente non rappresentano altro se non che qualità docili, civili e cortesi, con molta galantaria e urbanità, parlando e conversando con tutti familiarmente; ma tutta la loro familiarità sta fundata ad allettare gl'animi non solo d'i grandi ma ancora della plebe".

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PART III

Beyond Orientalism

CHAPTER 8

A Tale of Two Chancellors: Machiavelli, Celālzāde Muṣṭafā and Connected Political Cultures in the Cinquecento/the Hijri Tenth Century

Kaya Şahin

Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) never failed to elicit strong reactions from his readers. Throughout the early modern period, commentators heaped abuse on the works and their author. The tide turned after the mid-nineteenth century, when the negative interpretations evolved into intense academic attention and indeed admiration. Passions often overcame academic rigor, however, and Machiavelli was hailed as the founder of modern political realism, the herald of Italian nationalism or the father of modern revolutionary movements.¹ Another century went by until Quentin Skinner proposed to read the Machiavellian corpus within “the intellectual context of classical and Renaissance philosophy, as well as the political context of Italian city-state life at the start of the sixteenth century”.² Since then, Skinner, J.G.A. Pocock and other members of the Cambridge School fused history, philosophy and literary criticism to

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successfully evade the a-historical “perennialism” of an old-fashioned history of ideas.³

Despite its sophisticated critical apparatus, the Cambridge School did not address the question of Eurocentrism, or felt the need to step outside the contexts determined by Skinner. An edited volume on Machiavelli, Islam and the East may be an appropriate venue for widening those frames towards a more comprehensive understanding of early modern political thought. In this chapter, I propose to discuss European and Ottoman history together, as constituent parts of a global early modernity that led, among other things, to new ideas about the everyday management of human communities, the rights and duties of monarchs and the role of religion in political and social life. As a case study, I place Machiavelli side by side with an Ottoman career bureaucrat and author, Celâlzâde Muştafa (ca. 1490–1567). Inspired by Sanjay Subrahmanyam’s notion of connected histories, and the *histoire croisée* approach, the aim here is to go beyond a simple comparison of Machiavelli and Muştafa’s lives and works⁴; instead, their opinions and arguments will be treated as reactions to specific cultural and political dynamics that were felt across early modern Eurasia.

CONNECTING MACHIAVELLI WITH CELÂLZÂDE MUŞTAFA

Early modern authors from different parts of the globe are typically locked within specific intellectual and scholarly traditions that determine the interpretation of their works. The modern scholarly literature on Machiavelli, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, firmly situates him within a very European, not to say Eurocentric, historical narrative that culminates in the establishment of nation-states and liberal democracies; an author who was once reviled as a defiler of morality and religion is now celebrated as the defender of civic humanism and the harbinger of modern republicanism. On the other hand, despite a plethora of recent works that emphasise the vitality of early modern Islamic literate cultures, the likes of Muştafa continue to be relegated to a grey zone between classical Islamic political thought and modern political Islam. They are seen as unoriginal commentators of earlier works, and patronage-bound imperial servants whose writings are largely irrelevant for the problems of the modern period. If we adhere to either one of these two traditions, it becomes impossible to evaluate Machiavelli and Muştafa together, or even imagine that they were responding to similar

political and cultural challenges. This is where the importance of a connected reading within a wider historical context comes to the fore. Such a reading may at times over-emphasise the weight of historical context, or de-emphasise the impact of genuine differences in language, genre and tradition. However, it deserves to be attempted, on a limited scale such as this, if the alternative is to essentialise difference and turn it into an explanatory category for incommensurability among putative “civilisations”.

The formative political events of Machiavelli and Muṣṭafā’s lives began to unfold in the second half of the Quattrocento/the Hijri ninth century. The invasion of the Italian Peninsula by Charles VIII (r. 1483–1498) in 1494 turned a region already characterised by local and international competition into a stage for direct and proxy wars. These wars pitted the French monarchy, buoyed by a period of reconstruction after the end of the Hundred Years’ War in 1453, against the Habsburgs, whose domains fused post-Reconquista Spain with holdings throughout Europe, and who established control over the imperial title after the mid-fifteenth century. The Ottoman capture of Constantinople in 1453, on the other hand, inaugurated new notions of Ottoman imperial authority, and signalled a new wave of expansion supported by a more efficient central control over financial resources. By the time they reached the walls of Vienna two years after Machiavelli’s death, in 1529, the Ottomans had doubled the empire’s holdings, which now extended alongside two frontiers. In the east, the Ottoman zone of control and influence extended roughly from present-day Romania through eastern Hungary into Dalmatia; in the east, it descended from the eastern end of the Black Sea coast through eastern Anatolia into the border between the modern nation-states of Syria and Iraq. On the north–south axis, the Ottoman presence was felt from the northern shores of the Black Sea to Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula. This expansion positioned the Ottomans as the main rivals of the Habsburgs in Central Europe and the Mediterranean, while the rise of the Safavid dynasty in eastern Anatolia, Iraq and Iran on the strength of nomadic elements and a political theology that used messianic elements posed a tremendous logistical and cultural challenge to Ottoman imperialism.⁵

Machiavelli and Muṣṭafā lived through the birth pangs of a global early modernity that radically disrupted their ancestors’ world through rapid, often violent political, economic and cultural transformations. One reaction to these disruptions was the search for more centralised

political and military power, a topic that would figure predominantly in the works of both authors. As Linda Darling has noted, the Islamic polities of western Asia “faced the need to consolidate power in order to reduce the autonomy of the great men—military leaders, statesmen, and religious leaders—to standardise landholding and taxation (that is, military funding); and to develop a new relationship with trade and commercial wealth”. In Europe too, there was an increasingly prominent trend towards the “transition from hired armies led by potential rivals to military forces composed of the prince’s own retainers and subjects, as well as from shared or disputed sovereignty to an authority seeking predominance over all other sources of power”.⁶ These developments led to “territorial consolidation; firearms-aided intensification of warfare; more expansive, routinized administrative systems”, while they were also accompanied by “growing commercialization [and] wider popular literacy, along with a novel proliferation of vernacular texts”,⁷ which signalled the emergence of new political constituencies, and underwrote the formation and spread of new political ideas, some of which are found in Machiavelli and Muştafa’s writings.

While Machiavelli and his corpus have benefited from popular and scholarly attention for half a millennium, Muştafa and his works are not widely known outside the confines of Ottoman history. *The Prince* and *Discourses on Livy* are among the most popular reference works in modern debates on political thought and Renaissance history. Muştafa’s only political treatise, *Mevâhibu'l-hallâk fî merâtibi'l-ahlâk* (“Gifts of the Creator on the Levels of Morality”, hereafter *Mevâhib*), remained under the shadow of his historical output, and was forgotten soon after its composition.⁸ Machiavelli’s biography received several treatments that offer a veritable kaleidoscope, thanks to the existence of myriad sources that extend from his father’s diary to his correspondence with friends and associates, his diplomatic reports, documents in the Florentine archives and the material culture of the period.⁹ The paucity of personal documents from Muştafa’s time, and the taciturn pose he adopted vis-à-vis his personal life, hindered the emergence of such rich narratives.¹⁰ While Muştafa enjoyed a certain reputation as a secretary and historian during his life and following his death, this reputation eventually dwindled to a footnote in Ottoman history. Moreover, Machiavelli and Muştafa observed developments from different vantage points. Machiavelli’s Florence was “a régime that was universally regarded as feeble, dilatory, and deliberately evasive”.¹¹ While Muştafa was aware of the challenges

posed by endemic warfare, resource management, and the resilience of the Habsburgs and the Safavids, he served a militarily and financially strong empire with an elaborate claim to universal rule.

Despite the obvious disparities, there are several “commensurable” elements in their lives and works to warrant a “connected” reading (such a reading could obviously bring together several other literati-secretaries from East and West, whose presence became ubiquitous from Tudor England to Mughal India with the onset of early modernity).¹² Both served at a time when secretaries with classical educations (a humanist university training for Machiavelli, and a long madrasa training for Muṣṭafā) came to the fore as the managers of increasingly sophisticated economic and diplomatic networks. Their works teem with anecdotes and observations about new men of action who dwell in an increasingly violent world dominated by gunpowder weapons. They saw history as an endless struggle between rival forces and a repository of positive and negative examples. They both riled against human folly, and sought to manage the chaos they witnessed, even though they admitted the inscrutable power of fate; in the process, they promoted the secretary/advisor as an indispensable ally to the rising political classes. Both authors recognised the role of religion as a political instrument; at the same time, they developed a more complicated understanding of religion as the foundation of morality, a cohesive political community and a source of law. Finally, Machiavelli transformed the ancient Roman *virtù* into a form of practical and pragmatic rationality, while Muṣṭafā similarly turned ‘*akl*’ (a philosophical concept that was the subject of much debate about the limits and possibilities of the human intellect) into a political/bureaucratic instrument.¹³

CONNECTED LIVES: FROM SECRETARY TO LITTERATEUR

Machiavelli entered the Florentine chancery at a moment of transformation, following the departure of the Medici in 1494, the interlude (1494–1498) of Girolamo Savonarola (1452–1498), his execution, and the restoration of the Florentine Republic in 1498. Muṣṭafā became secretary of the imperial council in 1516, at a time when the Ottoman Empire was expanding against the Safavids in eastern Anatolia and the Mamluks in Syria and Egypt. As the secretary of the Second Chancery, an office focused on domestic affairs, Machiavelli initially composed and dispatched documents and letters; soon after, he was sent to various

courts on behalf of the First Chancery (which dealt with the city's external affairs) and the Ten of War. His career was practically ended after the restoration of the Medici rule in Florence in 1512; accused of taking part in an anti-Medici conspiracy, he was tortured and briefly imprisoned. Like Machiavelli, Muştafa's secretarial career initially involved the composition of documents and letters on behalf of the sultan and the grand vizier. Unlike Machiavelli, however, his political flair, coupled with considerable secretarial skills, helped him survive the fall of close collaborators and patrons; he remained chancellor (*nışâncı*) from 1534 until his retirement in 1557. In a Machiavellian sense, Muştafa displayed enough *virtù* to defeat *fortuna*.¹⁴

Throughout their careers, both were privileged observers of the major developments of their time. As Machiavelli's remarks about the Ottomans in *The Prince* show, like so many others in the Italian Peninsula, he was knowledgeable about Ottoman expansion in south-eastern Europe and the foundations of the Ottoman political system (incidentally, his nephew Giovanni Vernacci resided in Pera, across the Golden Horn from Constantinople, and they corresponded in 1513–1518).¹⁵ The political and military problems of Florence lent a particular urgency to his diplomatic missions, during which he visited, in search of alliances and compromises, the courts of King Louis XII of France (r. 1498–1515), the Duke of Valentinois Cesare Borgia (r. 1498–1507), Pope Julius II (1503–1513) and Emperor Maximilian I (r. 1486–1519). The events and personalities encountered throughout his career would later serve as exemplars that helped illustrate his thoughts on history, politics and human nature. As secretary, Muştafa worked in close proximity to Süleyman (r. 1520–1566) and his grand viziers, attended imperial council meetings, and wrote imperial correspondence; after becoming chancellor, he helped supervise the Ottoman military-fiscal system, contributed to Ottoman law, and interacted with French, Habsburg and Safavid envoys. Like Machiavelli, these secretarial experiences resonate throughout his writings.

Muştafa and Machiavelli left behind very similar pictures about the last years of their lives. In tune with their self-consciousness as secretaries and literati, they presented themselves conversing with ancient authors, sharing their works with the members of their social and cultural networks, and writing, almost obsessively.¹⁶ They were obviously motivated by the expansion in vernacular modes of writing, and the popularity of historical and political works among the new reading publics. Patronage was

important to Machiavelli, while Muṣṭafā, as a wealthy imperial servant, could afford to eschew it. It is also likely that both felt a particular concern about leaving behind a legacy in the form of the written word.

In his retirement, Muṣṭafā set out to write a panorama of the Ottoman Empire as he had witnessed its recent expansion. He brought together earlier writings, composed on the occasion of Süleymān's military campaigns; he developed them and composed additional chapters. In his table of contents, he announces a work that would have 30 sections, focusing on the sultan and his palace household, the fortresses and military forces of the empire, the city of Constantinople, the 20 governorates-general, and the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina. Only the last sub-section of the work was composed, however: an account of most of Süleymān's reign (from 1520 to 1556–1557), extending over several hundred folios, called *Tabakātū'l-memālik ve derecātū'l-mesālik* ("Echelons of the Dominions and Hierarchies of the Professions", hereafter *Tabakāt*).¹⁷ There, he narrates the unfolding of a new empire under Süleymān, while carefully avoiding Süleymān's final years, during which the ailing sultan strived to maintain peace among his warring sons. In his second historical work, *Selīmnāme* ("The Life of Selīm"), also composed during his retirement, Muṣṭafā revisits the reign of Selīm I (r. 1512–1520), which he portrays as a simpler time where heroism and individual merit helped the ruler defend and expand the Ottoman polity against internal and external rivals.

In both works, Muṣṭafā insists that he writes on the basis of information he gleaned through his unique access to Süleymān, his career as a secretary under him and, in the case of Selīm, through the testimonies of his mentors who conveyed their unique experiences to Muṣṭafā.¹⁸ These claims echo Machiavelli's statement, in the letter of dedication to Lorenzo de' Medici preceding *The Prince*, that he writes on the basis of knowledge acquired "in [a] lengthy experience with recent matters and my continual reading on ancient ones".¹⁹ Muṣṭafā's historical works can be read as ruminations on 'akl in military and political affairs, since individual actors are often evaluated according to their success or failure in displaying it.²⁰ His focus on the near past is significant, since it erases not only pre-Ottoman Islamic history, but the history of the Ottoman dynasty before the large transformations of the sixteenth century. Machiavelli's corpus reflects a much deeper engagement with the distant Roman past, as seen in *The Prince* and the *Discourses on Livy*. In Machiavelli's *Florentine Histories*, on the other hand, the reinterpretation

of the near past is enmeshed with an attempt at personal rehabilitation in the eyes of the Medici.²¹ In Muṣṭafā's case, while political redemption is not a motive, the urge to promote the omniscient secretary as an active contributor to the imperial edifice adds a prominent personal dimension to his historical output.

Muṣṭafā's only work dedicated to politics and ethics is *Mevāhib*, a creative translation and re-writing of a Persian treatise, *Akhlaq-i Muhsinī* ("Muhsin's Ethics") by Ḥusayn Vā'iz-i Kāshifī (d. 1504–1505).²² In *Mevāhib*, the flowery language of Muṣṭafā's historical works leaves its place to an accessible Ottoman Turkish. Muṣṭafā prefaces the political/ethical sections with a lengthy section on the 99 names of Allah, which gives the work a strong devotional quality. He then uses Kāshifī's original as a template upon which he inserts chapters on human morality and a chapter on '*akl*'; perhaps most notably, he divides the original's final chapter, "On the Servants of a Ruler", into two sections. He renames these sections "On the Sultanate" and "On the Vizierate", where he expounds his ideas on the function of the advisers and the duties of the rulers.²³ *Mevāhib* is the locus for Muṣṭafā's emphasis on morality and piety as personal and communal ideals. Perso-Islamic history, presented through several anecdotes that illustrate virtues and vices, is used as a background. At the same time, Muṣṭafā's views on political advice and rulership are anchored in his personal experiences, and reflect the values and expectations of the secretarial cadres. In a sense, *The Prince* predates *Mevāhib* as the work of a retired secretary and a litterateur whose self-appointed task is to help create an empire-builder, while *Mevāhib* emerges as the cultural and political statement of the secretary who desires to regulate the powers of the prince, and offer a set of political and moral principles after the much-desired empire is established.

Rather than interpreting the disparities between Machiavelli and Muṣṭafā as the signs of a civilisational difference between East and West, it is possible to see them as variations on similar themes. Some of these themes were provided by the emerging early modern world of political, cultural and religious tensions. Others were supplied by their respective intellectual traditions (it is also possible to argue that Machiavelli and Muṣṭafā's intellectual legacies stemmed from very similar origins: Christian and Muslim interpretations of ancient Greek political thought).²⁴ In Machiavelli's case, the history and culture of the Greco-Roman past, filtered through the works of medieval Christian writers, and subjected to intense scrutiny and interpretation from the late medieval

period into early European humanism, played an important role as inspiration, model and sometimes foil.²⁵ As Carlo Ginzburg discusses in a recent article on Machiavelli's reading of Aristotle, the classical legacy was not a seamlessly transferred body of knowledge on which there was an intellectual consensus; rather, Machiavelli arrived at Aristotle through commentaries and translations, which he supplanted with his own interpretation.²⁶ In Muṣṭafā's case, the Arabo-Persian tradition of political and moralistic writings exerted an important influence.²⁷ At the same time, Muṣṭafā and generations of early modern Ottoman authors had inherited a re-reading of this tradition, through works produced after the fall of the Abbasid caliphate to the Mongols in 1258, particularly in Timurid Central Asia.²⁸ Like the European humanists, authors in different parts of the Islamic world engaged in a creative work of re-interpreting the intellectual legacy of the past and adopting it to the political realities of the time they lived in.²⁹ Through these creative re-readings, the authors' agendas focused on the identity and attributes of the rulers, the relationship between religion and politics and the function of laws in the creation and management of a harmonious society.

CONVERGENCES AND DIVERGENCES: *VIRTÙ* AND '*AKL*

Machiavelli and Muṣṭafā's works present several convergences in their treatment of some of these general themes. Perhaps the most striking parallel is their search for a central principle that would guide human action. For Machiavelli, as is well known, this is *virtù*, "that quality which enables a prince to withstand the blows of fortune, to attract the goddess's favour, and to rise in consequence to the heights of princely fame, winning honour and glory for himself and security for his government".³⁰ Less romanticised definitions present *virtù* as "the idea of strength, efficiency, power, or efficacy in particular circumstances for particular purposes".³¹ It is a form of ongoing, focused, flexible process of reflection that prepares the individual for difficult circumstances that seem beyond human control, and sometimes allows him to bend them to his will.³² In Muṣṭafā's case, '*akl*' is a God-given quality that separates man from Satan.³³ In his *Mevāhib*, harkening to his madrasa education, Muṣṭafā provides a "classical" definition of '*akl*' by dividing it into two forms: a pure form and an experiential/practical one. The recipient of '*akl*' will be known through his rhetorical talents, the quality of his writing, the gifts he chooses for others, the ability to establish

social relationships, and indeed his outward look and cleanliness.³⁴ ‘*Akl* is one of the keys to salvation, since it deflects individuals from worldly pleasures and directs them towards good deeds and prayer.³⁵ The combination of knowledge (*‘ilm*), ‘*akl* and prudence (*hilm*) culminates in a perfect individual.³⁶

The practical aspects of *virtù* and ‘*akl* are amply demonstrated in both corpuses through specific historical examples. Both authors use these concepts with a sense of urgency, indeed emergency. To secretaries who witnessed the intensity of early modern imperial rivalries, *virtù* and ‘*akl* are not mere moral or philosophical principles, but political instruments. For instance, Ottoman viziers serving the Ottoman sultans are often evaluated according to their recourse to ‘*akl*. Indeed, ‘*akl* is made part and parcel of the Ottoman official’s toolkit, since its absence does not merely lead to individual misfortune, but the oppression of the empire’s subjects. The deployment of *virtù* and ‘*akl* is related to the authors’ wariness of *fortuna* (which can, although not always, be overcome through *virtù*) and simple human nature (whose animalistic tendencies are bridled through ‘*akl*). The secretary, on the basis of his observations, believes that passions may erupt at all times, and that the true motivations of the actors involved cannot be ascertained until they display their level of *virtù*/‘*akl*.³⁷

Despite their emphasis on individual initiative and pragmatic action, both authors approach *virtù* and ‘*akl* through an elitist lens, even though Machiavelli’s elitism is tempered by his references to popular/plebeian *virtù*. Machiavelli, as Skinner argues, claims that the masses may not display *virtù* consistently, and thus have to be guided by a leader, at least initially until a functioning polity is established. A more intransigent elitism defines Muştafa’s approach to ‘*akl*, to the extent of precluding any form of popular political action. In *Mevâhib*, he argues that the subject population is unable to distinguish between good and evil, due to their state of ignorance.³⁸ In another passage, while he admits that some members of the subject population may display ‘*akl*, piety and righteousness, others are said to vacillate between good and evil, and still others engage in vile deeds.³⁹ Muştafa’s worldview envisages “an abstract hierarchy of intellects affiliated to a scale of spiritual and political authority”. “[S]ince the proper qualifications for the exercise of political power are knowledge and wisdom, those possessed of a lower degree of intellectual aptitude have commensurately less authority”.⁴⁰ As a result, the subject population has to be led by a ruler, who in turn has to be

assisted by virtuous secretaries and servants. The Greco-Roman tradition, as reinvented by the humanists and reread by Machiavelli, allows a discussion of different forms of rule that include monarchy, aristocracy and democracy; especially in *Discourses*, the monarchic imperative of *The Prince* leaves its place to the promotion of urban autonomy. In Muṣṭafā's case, however, Ottoman imperialism emerges as the sole desirable and indeed possible form of rule. While *libertà* is the antithesis of tyranny in Machiavelli,⁴¹ Muṣṭafā argues that oppression of the subjects (*zulm*) can only be remedied through the ruler's—and his servants'—dedication to justice ('*adl*), which regulates the relationship between the ruler and the ruled through a mixture of the *sharī'ah* and the sultanic law (*kānūn*).

CONVERGENCES AND DIVERGENCES: POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

There are several convergences and divergences in the portrayal of political leadership in Muṣṭafā and Machiavelli, and the authors are not always consistent about its attributes. While Machiavelli searches for a saviour, Muṣṭafā writes from the position of someone who has already identified that figure: Süleymān. Machiavelli's "Exhortation", at the end of *The Prince*, predicts the emancipation of Italy "under the guidance of a great political founder not only sent by God but also a friend of God, just like Moses".⁴² Indeed, Machiavelli, who lived through Savonarola's "New Jerusalem", attributes the friar's fall to his failure to become an armed prophet like Moses.⁴³ In the earlier sections of Muṣṭafā's *Tabakāt*, Süleymān is indeed an armed prophet whose exploits are compared to those of Prophet Solomon; he is also the "master of the auspicious conjunction" (*şāhib-ķırān*), the divinely—and cosmically-sanctioned ruler who distinguishes himself through his struggles with the Habsburgs and the Safavids over universal monarchy and the leadership of the Muslim community.⁴⁴

Machiavelli's prince, trailing behind Süleymān, is initially tasked with "recognizing the force of circumstances, accepting what necessity dictates, and harmonizing one's behaviour with the times".⁴⁵ After the initial momentum of empire building, on the other hand, the ruler is tasked with the maintenance of the state (*mantenere lo stato*) through the establishment of armies and the provision of justice. Taken as a whole, Machiavelli's corpus thus seems to navigate between two poles: on the one hand, in order to exist and survive in a violent world, the prince has to jettison all moral qualms and adopt a form of practical rationality

whose ultimate objective is a form of imperial rule. On the other hand, in a fashion that belies the representation of Machiavelli as the theoretician of brute force, the author recognises the value of an established system that would sustain a polity, even in the form of a republic of citizens who may not need a sole ruler after a while.

A similar shift is observed in Muṣṭafā's additions to his *Tabakāt* during his retirement, and particularly in the *Mevāhib*, where the imperial polity itself becomes a more distinct creation, a geographical entity and a political system whose ruler is tasked with several duties in order to ensure its good management. Rulership in *Mevāhib* becomes a duty that requires constant vigilance. The ruler has to supervise the affairs of the realm, investigate the condition of the subject population, gather and direct armies, ensure the well-being of the ruling elite through the distribution of land grants, pursue mischief makers and oppressors, follow divine guidance in the form of personal piety as well as the application of the *sharī'ah* and seek counsel.⁴⁶ The figure of the secretary/advisor lurks behind these lines and his weight increases exponentially, especially as the polity settles down. In the earlier, violent stages of the march to power, the secretary is still useful in an advisory capacity. After the imperial enterprise matures, however, tasks such as the drafting and application of just laws, and indeed the business of government itself, can best be achieved through the actions of knowledgeable individuals. In Machiavelli, these can be virtuous citizens; in Muṣṭafā's more elitist characterisation, the secretaries will help guide the polity.⁴⁷

CONVERGENCES AND DIVERGENCES: RELIGION

Next to the debates on political leadership, the early modern era witnessed several changes in the understanding of religion and ritual and the relationship between religion and politics. In this environment, *religione*, for Machiavelli, and *dīn*, for Muṣṭafā, gained different meanings and functions, extending from simple adherence to a set of beliefs and rituals to a political and cultural instrument used to regulate communal life. In terms of individual piety, Muṣṭafā portrays himself as a profoundly devout Muslim in the prefaces to his various works. Written in his retirement, the tone of these passages may have been exacerbated by late-life ruminations and regrets; this does not change the fact that his writings are traversed by a strong dedication to Sunni Islam, as belief and ritual, moral code and imperial identity marker. In Machiavelli's case, the

scholarship vacillates between the portrait of a profoundly irreligious, immoral, quasi-Faustian figure *à la* Leo Strauss, and the recent attempts by Sebastian de Grazia and Maurizio Viroli at reclaiming Machiavelli as a Christian believer.⁴⁸

Muṣṭafā and Machiavelli were both influenced by their careers and circumstances in their approach to religion. Machiavelli's critique of organised religion relies on his observations of contemporary Italian politics, and the divisive role played by the Papacy as a political institution. Particularly in *Discourses*, Roman Christianity emerges as a barrier in front of a more active civic life, and it is contrasted with ancient Roman religion, defined as a political and cultural instrument that builds and perpetuates political and cultural cohesion, and fosters *virtù*.⁴⁹ Beyond ancient Roman religion, *a form*, seemingly any form of religion is necessary in order for a prince or a republic to keep their polity "uncorrupted".⁵⁰ This instrumentalist understanding of religion finds its most extreme demonstration, in *The Prince*, in the case of Ferdinand II of Aragon (King of Castile and León, r. 1475–1504; King of Aragon, r. 1479–1516). Machiavelli notes the "pious cruelty" he exhibited when "availed himself of religion" to expropriate and expel the Marranos, even though he also registers his discontent with the king's actions by observing that "no memorable act could be more pitiable than this or more extraordinary".⁵¹ The idea that some monarchs rule by divine decree, regardless of the moral quality of their actions, is also present in Machiavelli, just as Muṣṭafā portrays Süleymān as both motivated by a wish to fulfil God's will, and supported by God against his rivals.⁵² Machiavelli's idea of religion thus reflects the concept's myriad uses and interpretations in the Renaissance.⁵³ While his views are closely bound by historical and political context, the particular dynamism of his approach stems from his attempt at interpreting and discussing religion at every turn, within the scope of politics, instead of taking it for granted, in the form of a frozen institution and a body of strict rituals.⁵⁴

In Muṣṭafā's case, one factor that gave a particularly political dimension to his understanding of religion was the rise of the Safavid dynasty from the last decades of the fifteenth century onwards, and the Safavid espousal of a millenarian ideology based on the tenets of Twelver Shiism.⁵⁵ While the Ottoman ruling elite had been usually staffed by the adherents of the Sunni Hanafi school, this adherence gained a more political character, and was better defined theologically as well as culturally, throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries with the

Safavid challenge in mind. In his historical works, and the correspondence he wrote in the name of the sultan, Muṣṭafā emerged as one of the vocal defenders of Ottoman Sunnism against a rival empire.⁵⁶ Indeed, he saw religion as a major identity marker for the Ottoman imperial enterprise, by positing Ottoman Sunnism against Safavid Shiism, and Islam *tout court* against the empire's Christian rivals.

Next to this politicised understanding of religion, Muṣṭafā's writings present Islam as a source of law in the form of the *sharī'ah*; together with sultanic law, *kānūn*, *sharī'ah* is promoted as one of the foundations of good government.⁵⁷ Religion is also useful, in Muṣṭafā's *Mevāhib*, as a set of limitations on the ruler, where he equates the ruler's religious duties with his duties vis-à-vis the subject population; the subjects have to receive the bounty of justice, and they have to be free from oppression and corruption. This subject population included Muslims as well as Christians and Jews, as Muṣṭafā was well aware: unlike Machiavelli, he worked for a political centre whose subjects belonged to a variety of religious communities, and he admitted that the subjects, regardless of their religion, had to be treated fairly in order to preserve the order. At the end, religion always meant something more than simple belief and ritual, and was always tinged with politics and pragmatism.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Machiavelli and Muṣṭafā inhabited violent worlds, full of war, political strife and religious controversy. Machiavelli advocated for the establishment of a viable polity in the midst of corruption and chaos, while Muṣṭafā sought to protect an imperial edifice from turmoil. They lived in different geographies, and wrote within what they saw as distinct political and cultural traditions; yet, their works display enough similarities to warrant a connected and contextual reading, as I suggested throughout this chapter. Such a connected reading exposes a few fault lines in our established scholarly traditions.

First of all, such a reading invites us to think of a global early modernity that did not only consist of economic exchanges, but of parallel intellectual currents as well. Muṣṭafā never read Machiavelli, but he would have identified a number of familiar themes in his writings, as suggested above. Their main difference stemmed from the nature of the polities within which they lived. Muṣṭafā's imperialism belonged to a post-Machiavellian moment, where a redeemer had been able to establish

an empire that was shored up through military might, economic power and political/legal institutionalisation. The role of the courtier or the royal favourite in the early modern period has been convincingly established; the examples of Machiavelli and Muṣṭafā invite us to the study of another ubiquitous, and fairly global, social type that played a crucial role in early modern political cultures: the secretary. A secretary was not a scholar, despite his frequent claims to be the holder of a specific type of knowledge; he was not a military man, either, but a figure proposing to manage the chaos to which military men often contributed. The secretary wielded his pen throughout his eventful career, and well into his retirement, leaving behind a legacy on the written page, as seen in the case of Machiavelli and Muṣṭafā.

Second, a joint reading problematises the sea change of the nineteenth century, when western capitalist modernity overtook the rest of the globe through the dual forces of economic domination and mechanised warfare, and ended a multi-centred early modernity that had determined economic exchange and international political relations since the mid-fifteenth century. On the cultural side of this process, authors like Machiavelli were rehabilitated as the harbingers of modern nationalisms and the nation-states, while authors like Muṣṭafā, associated with the once-glorious past of the now declining empires, receded into the background. Any joint reading of Machiavelli and Muṣṭafā thus becomes an attempt at peeling back the readings imposed by modernity, and seeking for the genuine voices of the Cinquecento/the Hijri tenth century.

Machiavelli and Muṣṭafā's dilemmas remain unresolved. What is the weight of religion in political affairs? What is the relationship between individual piety and the political/instrumental use of religion? Is it possible to maintain a polity without recourse to violence? Is a supreme ruler needed, as an arbiter of all things? What do we do when laws fail to underwrite justice and harmony? Who will be the guarantor of that justice? The community itself, an oligarchy of knowledgeable citizens/secretaries or an absolute ruler? More importantly, is it possible to preserve personal integrity in the middle of a turbulent world? At the same time, they remain unified through their belief in human action as the foundation of political life, as long as that action is informed by *virtù*/*'akl*. That, together with the global early modern world in which they lived, provides us with a strong element of commensurability that defies essentialist readings of European and Islamic political cultures.

NOTES

1. M. Viroli (2014), *Redeeming The Prince: The Meaning of Machiavelli's Masterpiece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press): 1–20.
2. Q. Skinner (2000), *Machiavelli: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press): 2.
3. For the Cambridge School's approach see two collections of articles: Q. Skinner (2002), *Visions of Politics*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); Vol. 1, *Regarding Method*; J.G.A. Pocock (2009), *Political Thought and History: Essays on Theory and Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
4. S. Subrahmanyam (1997), “Connected Histories: Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia”, *Modern Asian Studies*, 31, no. 3, 735–762; M. Werner and B. Zimmermann (2006), “Beyond Comparison: Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity”, *History and Theory*, 45, no. 1, 30–50.
5. This short historical sketch is provided on the basis of R. Bonney (1991), *The European Dynastic States, 1494–1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press): 79–99; C. Finkel (2005), *Osmans Dream: The History of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Basic Books): 48–125.
6. L.T. Darling (2008), “Political Change and Political Discourse in the Early Modern Mediterranean World”, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 38, no. 4, 521.
7. V. Lieberman (1999), “Introduction”, in: V. Lieberman (ed.), *Beyond Binary Histories: Re-Imagining Eurasia to c. 1830* (Ann Arbor and Richmond: University of Michigan Press): 14.
8. The copy I use is the manuscript kept in Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Fatih 3521.
9. For a few biographical works that reflect different styles and approaches, see S. Anglo (1969), *Machiavelli: A Dissection* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World); S. de Grazia (1989), *Machiavelli in Hell* (Princeton: Princeton University Press); M. Viroli (2000), *Niccolò's Smile: A Biography of Machiavelli*, trans. A. Shugaar (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux); C. Vivanti (2013), *Niccolò Machiavelli: An Intellectual Biography*, trans. S. MacMichael (Princeton: Princeton University Press); R. Black (2013), *Machiavelli* (New York: Routledge).
10. For recent studies see M.Ş. Yılmaz (2006), “‘Koca Nişancı’ of Kanuni: Celalzade Mustafa Çelebi, Bureaucracy and ‘Kanun’ in the Reign of Süleyman the Magnificent (1520–1566)” (Ph.D. dissertation: Bilkent University), where Muṣṭafā’s *Mevāhib* is not discussed in detail; K. Şahin (2013), *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman: Narrating the Sixteenth-Century Ottoman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

11. Anglo, *Machiavelli: A Dissection*, 38. For the events of the troubled time during which Machiavelli served Florence, see J.M. Najemy (2006), *A History of Florence 1200–1575* (Malden: Blackwell): 375–445.
12. For the concept of commensurability as a critical tool in the search for global connections in early modernity, see S. Subrahmanyam (2007), “Par-delà l’incommensurabilité: Pour une histoire connectée des empires aux temps modernes”, *Revue d’histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 54, no. 5, 34–53; for an application of the concept see K. Şahin and J. Schleck (2016), “Courtly Connections: Anthony Sherley’s *Relation of His Trauels* (1613) in a Global Context”, *Renaissance Quarterly*, 69, no. 1, 80–115.
13. On ‘*akl*’ in classical Islamic philosophy, see H.A. Davidson (1992), *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes, on Intellect: Their Cosmologies, Theories of the Active Intellect, and Theories of Human Intellect* (Oxford: Oxford University Press). I thank Yasin Ramazan for bringing this work to my attention.
14. A concise account of Machiavelli’s secretarial career is in Skinner, *Machiavelli: A Very Short Introduction*, 3–22. For more details see Anglo, *Machiavelli: A Dissection*, 13–57; Vivanti, *Niccolò Machiavelli*, 3–67; Viroli, *Niccolò’s Smile*, 29–130. For Muṣṭafā’s career see Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman*, 28–145 passim.
15. The letters are in N. Machiavelli (1989), *The Chief Works and Others*, ed. and trans. A. Gilbert, 3 vols. (Durham and London: Duke University Press): Vol. 2, nos. 146, 160, 161, 162, 164, 167–169.
16. For Machiavelli’s activities in his retirement, see Vivanti, *Niccolò Machiavelli*, 3–67; Viroli, *Niccolò’s Smile*, 71–191. For Muṣṭafā, see Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman*, 145–154.
17. Celälzâde Muṣṭafā (1981), *Geschichte Sultan Süleymân Kânûnîs von 1520 bis 1557, oder, Tabakât ül-Memâlik ve Derecât ül-Mesâlik*, ed. P. Kappert (Wiesbaden: Steiner).
18. For an analysis of Muṣṭafā’s historical output, see Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman*, 157–185.
19. Machiavelli, *The Chief Works*, Vol. I, 10.
20. Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman*, 233–238.
21. For Machiavelli’s use of the past see Anglo, *Machiavelli: A Dissection*, 238–269; for his views on, and treatment of the history of Florence, see J.M. Najemy (1982), “Machiavelli and the Medici: The Lessons of Florentine History”, *Renaissance Quarterly*, 35, 551–576.
22. Kâshîfî completed his work in Herat in 1501–1502 and dedicated it to the Timurid ruler of Central Asia, Sultân-Ḥusayn Bâyqarâ (r. 1469–1506). The Muhsin of the title is a reference to Abû al-Muhsin Mîrzâ (d. 1507), Bâyqarâ’s son and the work’s addressee. A partial English translation is H.V. Kâshîfî (1850), *Akhlaq-ı Muhsini, or, the Morals of the Beneficent*,

- trans. H.G. Keene (Hertford: Stephen Austin). For a discussion of the work, see M.E. Subtelny (2003), “A Late Medieval Persian Summa on Ethics: Kashifi’s Akhlāq-i Muhsinī”, *Iranian Studies*, 36, no. 4, 601–614.
23. Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Süleyman*, 232–233.
 24. For the development of an Islamic Aristotelianism in political thought, see G. Fowden (2012), “Pseudo-Aristotelian Politics and Theology in Universal Islam”, in: P.F. Bang and D. Kołodziejczyk (eds), *Universal Empire: A Comparative Approach to Imperial Culture and Representation in Eurasian History* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press): 130–148. For a discussion of the joint intellectual origins, see Lucio Biasiori’s contribution to this volume. For readings of Machiavelli and his near-contemporaries within larger intellectual and historical contexts, also see V. Syros (2015), “All Roads Lead to Florence: Renaissance Jewish Thinkers and Machiavelli on Civil Strife”, *Viator*, 47, no. 1, 349–364; V. Syros (2015), “Behind Every Great Reformer There is a ‘Machiavelli’: Al-Maghīlī, Machiavelli, and the Micro-Politics of an Early Modern African and an Italian City-State”, *Philosophy East and West*, 65, no. 4, 1119–1148.
 25. The weight of this tradition is particularly emphasised in an old yet still intriguing work: A.H. Gilbert (1938), *Machiavelli’s Prince and Its Forerunners: The Prince as a Typical Book de Regimine Principum* (New York: Barnes & Noble). A recent and detailed re-assessment of Machiavelli’s classical legacies is in Black, *Machiavelli*, 99–176 passim.
 26. C. Ginzburg (2015), “Intricate Readings: Machiavelli, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas”, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 78, 157–172.
 27. For an account of the formation of Islamic political thought in the Near East from ancient Mesopotamia to the fifteenth century, see L.T. Darling (2013), *A History of Social Justice and Political Power in the Middle East: The Circle of Justice from Mesopotamia to Globalization* (London: Routledge): 15–125.
 28. See C.H. Fleischer (1986), *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Ālı (1541–1600)* (Princeton: Princeton University Press): 273–292.
 29. For the rise of a new Ottoman political thinking in the sixteenth century, see H. Yilmaz (2005), “The Sultan and the Sultanate: Envisioning Rulership in the Age of Süleymān the Lawgiver (1520–1566)” (Ph.D. dissertation: Harvard University). For the Indian subcontinent, see M. Alam (2004), *The Languages of Political Islam: India 1200–1800* (London: Hurst & Company).
 30. Skinner, *Machiavelli*, 40.
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35. Ibidem, fols. 82a, 329a.
36. Ibidem, fols. 272b–273a.
37. Viroli, *Redeeming the Prince*, 81–91.
38. *Mevāhib*, fols. 174b–175a.
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40. L. Marlow (1997), *Hierarchy and Egalitarianism in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press): 49–50.
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Machiavelli Enters the Sublime Porte: The Introduction of *The Prince* to the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman World

Nergiz Yılmaz Aydoğdu

This chapter aims to revise common ideas about the circulation of Niccolò Machiavelli's writing in the Islamic world by presenting and discussing a manuscript containing the most ancient Ottoman Turkish translation of *The Prince* that is known today, recently discovered at the Topkapı Palace Museum Library (*Sarāy-i Hümâyün*), Istanbul. A preliminary aspect to consider is that this celebrated work by Machiavelli did not go through an autonomous reception in the Ottoman culture. Only a translation of the treatise titled *Anti-Machiavel*, written in 1739 by King Frederick II of Prussia (r. 1740–1786), made it possible to have *The Prince* also available in Ottoman Turkish. Famously supported by Voltaire, who encouraged its publication (1740) and extensively revised the text, *Anti-Machiavel* was a sharp critique of Machiavelli's *The Prince*, but also promoted its circulation since it included the entire text in order to refute it passage by passage.¹

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Since this was the indirect way in which Machiavelli entered the Sublime Porte, the first part of my analysis focuses on the main formal characteristics of the manuscript and provides a possible date for it, as well as a conjecture about the identity of its anonymous translator. This brings us to the delicate situation of Ottoman political culture in the second half of the eighteenth century, when the translation of *The Prince*, associated with *Anti-Machiavel*, saw the light. In the second section of this chapter special attention is given to the meaning of its appearance for the more general question about European literature's influence on Ottoman thought, which has long been a matter of discussion in relation to the problem of so-called Ottoman modernisation (1718–1920). No doubt, in this context, European political culture has long been regarded as the source of a period of reformation in the mid-nineteenth century, known as the *Tanzīmāt*, which attempted to reorganise the institutional structure of the Ottoman Empire.² Yet scholars have rarely considered concrete interactions with specific ideas and writings. Therefore, the study of the translation of European works into Ottoman Turkish is particularly important for understanding the mind-set and the intellectual issues of the period.

Consequently, the final part of the chapter explores the possible implications of the real choices made to adapt *The Prince* to the expectations of its readers, starting with Sultan Muṣṭafā III (r. 1757–1774), who had ordered its translation together with *Anti-Machiavel*. Looking at the specific notions and the vocabulary used by the translator discloses orientations and concerns surrounding Machiavelli's text and its refutation. More broadly, it sheds light on unknown features of the intense but nonlinear exchanges between Ottoman culture and the European political tradition in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

THE ENIGMA OF A MANUSCRIPT

There is no consensus of opinion in the scholarly tradition about when Machiavelli was introduced into Turkish culture. Some records can be regarded only as unverified narratives: a case in point is the statement made by the Venetian Giovanni Sagredo in his *Memorie istoriche de' Monarchi Ottomani* (1673), suggesting that Sultan Murāt IV (r. 1623–1640) used to read *The Prince*.³ Whatever the truth of the matter, an open dialogue with Machiavelli is generally accepted as having taken place through the translation of *The Prince* (*Hukumdar*) by Haydār Rifat

in 1908, issued in a magazine called *Zakā*. The work was then published as a whole in Ottoman Turkish for the first time by Mehmet Şarīf in 1919, while the first translation of *The Prince* in the Latin alphabet by Haydār Rifat appeared in 1932.⁴

A recent discovery allows us to reconsider the whole question of, and to backdate by at least one and a half centuries, the acquaintance of Ottoman culture with Machiavelli. The starting point is a passage from the *Letteratura turchesca* (1787) by the Venetian abbot Giovanni Battista Toderini (1728–1799), a former Jesuit, who lived in Istanbul from 1781 to 1786, being a member of the Venetian *bailo* Agostino Garzoni's retinue. A collector of books and works in oriental languages, Toderini reports that Muṣṭafā III owned a translation of *The Prince* and adds that the sultan “also ordered the refutation of that perverse politics, that is *Anti-Machiavel* by the king of Prussia to be translated into the Turkish language”.⁵ Many scholars have repeated Toderini's account, without providing any information about where and when this translation was made and to whom it was addressed.⁶ What is more, nobody has found the supposed translation mentioned by Toderini, which I now propose to identify as an anonymous manuscript held at the Topkapı Palace Museum Library, under the classification *Hazānah 372*, containing Frederick II's *Anti-Machiavel* in Ottoman Turkish, wrongly recorded as a text translated by a Spinozist.⁷

Substantially unknown and never studied until recently, this 226-page-long manuscript is the only known copy of the work.⁸ Numbered by pages in the index and not by foils, the manuscript is in the *Ta’līk* style of calligraphy and contains twenty-one lines per page. Being 215 mm high and 120 mm wide, the book is of pocket size. Considering the gold illumination of the front page, maroon leather bound cover, gilded calligraphy, ornamented page layout and other similar features, the manuscript was probably prepared for, and presented to, the sultan. The handwriting follows eighteenth-century standards, a further aspect that is consistent with Toderini's report. However, the manuscript offers no explicit or implicit references to the identity of the latter, when he did his work, or the language he translated from. Therefore, if we want to make some conjectures about these aspects, we must turn to other contemporary sources.

First of all, we should consider to what extent Toderini provides us with entirely reliable clues to solve the enigma of this manuscript. He tells us that he was informed about the work “by the translator in person, a dignitary who wants to stay hidden. Sultan Muṣṭafā sent him the

Machiavelli with its refutation in the French language, so that he translated both of them, and he made it arrive leaf after leaf into the emperor's hands".⁹ It is not certain that we should give full credit to this account, since in the original French version of *Anti-Machiavel*, Machiavelli's work and the refutation go together, while Toderini indicates them as two separate texts. More generally, this passage is also problematic because, being based on oral, anonymous information, it recounts facts that had occurred more than ten years before, Muṣṭafā III having died in 1774 and the *Letteratura turchesca* being published in 1787.

An earlier source that should be considered is an account attributed to a Florentine abbot, the traveller and antiquarian Domenico Sestini (1750–1832), who started to visit Istanbul regularly in 1768 as well as the rest of Turkey, the Levant and Mesopotamia. It is on his authority that the Jansenist abbot Reginaldo Tanzini (1746–1825) confirms in his preface to an edition of Machiavelli's complete works, published in Florence by Gaetano Cambiagi in 1782–1783, that "the book of *The Prince* was even translated into Turkish by order of Muṣṭafā III, to educate him and his sons, and the Turks know his author, whom they call *Muchievel*".¹⁰ After rejecting Sagredo's account about Sultan Murāt IV, a footnote explains that Sestini "speaks of this fact in many of his letters to Mr Giovanni Mariti, in which he maintains that Doctor Gobbis, physician of the Great Lord [i.e., the sultan], told him that the translation of *The Prince* and *Anti-Machiavel* was made, by order of Muṣṭafā III, by a talented dragoman, with the assistance of a Turkish learned man, provided by Muṣṭafā himself, and that this translation exists in the Library of the Great Lord, in the Seraglio".¹¹ Interestingly, this edition was dedicated to the art collector and patron of arts and science, George Nassau Clavering-Cowper, an English nobleman who then lived in Florence. He had been able to combine his status as a peer and earl in Great Britain with the new title of prince of the Holy Roman Empire, an association that might be relevant to the context in which the Topkapı Palace manuscript was produced, as we will see. At the same time, the reference to the translation of *Anti-Machiavel* invites us to establish a connection between the information attributed to Sestini and a passage included in the issue of the periodical *L'Esprit des Journaux, François et Étrangers*, published in September 1783, which, after insinuating that the Dutch physician Herman Boerhaave (1668–1738) had some sympathy for the philosopher Baruch Spinoza, reports that "a part of his writings was translated into Turkish by Mr Herbert, dragoman of the emperor".¹²

The identification of the translator of Boerhaave's *Institutiones medicæ* (1708) into Ottoman Turkish as Thomas Herbert (1738–1775), a dragoman of the Holy Roman imperial embassy in Istanbul, was already an established fact in the mid-nineteenth century, when it was mentioned in his published biographies.¹³ To be more precise, he just assisted the court physician Şubhîzâdah ‘Abd al-‘Azîz Efendi, who made the version of both *Institutiones medicæ* and *Aphorismi de cognoscendis et curandis morbis* (1709).¹⁴ Herbert belonged to a noble family of Catholics, who had emigrated from the British Isles to Istanbul in the aftermath of the deposition of King James II (r. 1685–1688) in the context of the Glorious Revolution (1688–1689). Thanks to the efforts of his father, John Herbert, Thomas and his two younger brothers, Peter Philip and John, started to serve the Holy Roman Empire, their Catholic faith presumably being no disadvantage in this. Unlike Peter Philip and John, however, Thomas Herbert continued to live in Istanbul, where he cultivated his interest in oriental languages and literature, and acted as diplomatic mediator between Europeans and Ottomans.

Was he the “talented dragoman” mentioned by Sestini, according to the 1782 Florentine edition of Machiavelli’s works? According to Toderini, Muştafa III “ordered the *Aphorisms* by Boerhaave to be translated into Ottoman Turkish by Mr Herbert, brother of the current imperial inter-nuncio to the Porte”—a reference to Peter Philip Herbert, who served as imperial ambassador in Istanbul from 1780 to 1789, after being granted the title of baron (*Freiherr*) von Rathkeal by Empress Maria Theresa of Habsburg (r. 1740–1780) in 1779. Yet Toderini makes no connection between this activity and the translation of Machiavelli, which he ascribes to “a dignitary who wants to stay hidden”, as if he were still alive in the 1780s, unlike Thomas Herbert.¹⁵ The fact is still more surprising if we note that Toderini quotes “Doctor Gobis, a medical physician”—that is, Filippo Gobbi from Trieste¹⁶—who was also Sestini’s informant about the Ottoman version of *The Prince* and *Anti-Machiavel* existing in the Seraglio.¹⁷ Be that as it may, the translator of these works is explicitly identified as Thomas Herbert in a new edition of Machiavelli’s works, published in Florence in 1813. The editor Francesco Tassi modifies the text of Tanzini’s preface here and there, including the footnote concerning Sestini, whose letters are now recalled as evidence that “the translation of *The Prince* and *Anti-Machiavel* was made, by order of Muştafa III, by Mr d’Herbert, then dragoman, with the assistance of a Turkish learned man”.¹⁸

There is no doubt that the “Mr d’Herbert” mentioned here is Thomas Herbert, since he was the only one of the three brothers living in Istanbul at the time of Muṣṭafā III, where he was dragoman of the Holy Roman imperial embassy and a renowned translator of European writings into Ottoman Turkish. This identification would support us in dating the anonymous Topkapı Palace manuscript to the reign of Muṣṭafā III. However, one must admit that, no matter how probable it is, the recognition of Thomas Herbert as the translator of *The Prince* and *Anti-Machiavel* is only conjecture, since there is no direct evidence. The alleged letters by Sestini are unknown, since they are not included in the collection of his correspondence published from 1779 to 1784, containing missives sent from Istanbul to his cousin and master, the Florentine antiquarian Giovanni Mariti, in 1778. It is, however, noteworthy that not only was part of this collection published—and possibly selected—by Cambiagi, the publisher of the 1782–1783 edition of Machiavelli’s works that first spread the news of the translation of *The Prince* into Ottoman Turkish, but that Sestini dedicated the seventh and last volume to the ambassador Herbert Freiherr von Rathkeal, Thomas’s brother.¹⁹ What we can say with certainty is that between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century some scattered news circulated across Europe about an Ottoman version of *The Prince* ordered by Sultan Muṣṭafā III, gradually converging on the name of the late Thomas Herbert as its translator, with the assistance of a “Turkish learned man”. Doctor Gobbi presumably gave this information to Sestini, who in turn transmitted it to his correspondents in Florence. We cannot exclude the possibility that, once he had returned to his native city, Sestini reaffirmed it to the French diplomat and learned man Jean-Alexis-François Artaud de Montor (1772–1849), who lived for a long time in Italy. In fact, in a work on Machiavelli published in 1833, Artaud repeats almost word-for-word the passage from the 1813 preface about the Ottoman translation of *The Prince* by Herbert, adding that “Abbot Sestini, with whom I talked about this first fact in Florence, confirms its existence”.²⁰

This information clearly originated from the milieu of the European residents in Istanbul, which contrasts with the silence of Ottoman sources. Therefore, we should take into account that the voices spreading across Europe might involve some distortion, or embellishment, of the facts, as in the case of Toderini’s report about Herbert’s role in the translation of Boerhaave’s medical writings. As in this circumstance, in which he was not the real translator but only the assistant of court physician Şubḥīzādah ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Efendi, the relationship of Herbert with the “Turkish

learned man” might need to be inverted with respect to the version provided by Sestini, at least according to Tanzini’s preface to the 1782 edition of Machiavelli’s works. In both instances, Doctor Gobbi might have preferred to attribute the merit of translating *The Prince* to a man of European origin, instead of acknowledging that Herbert, a native of Istanbul who mastered Ottoman Turkish, was just collaborating with local interpreters, who were certainly more able to adapt these versions to the interests and concerns of Muṣṭafā III and his court. This hypothesis might be corroborated by the fact that, while Toderini says that the translator was still alive during his stay in Istanbul, he does not clarify where he was from, thus making it possible that he is referring to a Turk. A close reading of the translation must take into account all these possibilities about its authorship. In any case, this analysis also requires a better understanding of the Ottoman political and cultural context, in which the idea of reading *The Prince*, or rather its refutation by Frederick II, was emerging. The next section is meant to shed light on some relevant aspects of this.

TRANSLATING ANTI-MACHIAVEL AS A RESPONSE TO STAGNATION?

According to Toderini, Muṣṭafā III was so familiar with the personality of Frederick II—who was highly regarded in Istanbul’s political and intellectual milieus for having established the “Great Prussia”—that he considered his refutation a reliable antidote to Machiavelli’s “perverse politics”, something that strongly attracted the sultan as well, evidently. Significantly, Toderini stresses that, “if the books of Turkish politics are not contaminated by so wicked doctrines”, their political attitude is “wholly Machiavellian, even before Machiavelli rose up, and so masterly that the Ottomans could make it a lesson for him”.²¹

However we are to use the evidence provided by an author like Toderini, who clearly adhered to the eighteenth-century leitmotiv of Turkish despotism, there is no doubt that Frederick II’s popularity at the Ottoman court was first of all connected to his renown as a military genius and a great statesman. One should remember that his commands to soldiers, originally written in German, were later translated from a French version by the historian Şānizādah Maḥmud ‘Atāllāh Efendi into Ottoman Turkish, under the title *Tanbīhāt i Ḥukumrān bā Sar’askarān* (“The Ruler’s Warnings”), and then presented to Sultan Selīm III

(r. 1789–1807).²² A work about the principles of war, written by one of Frederick II's commanders, was also translated and the king's secret orders to his soldiers were added in the footnotes.²³ Finally, as a result of the interest in Frederick II, all his books are said to have been eventually sent to the Ottoman state in 1872.²⁴

We should understand all this in the light of the fact that in the eighteenth century the Ottoman Empire had to face military and diplomatic challenges against European powers in the west, and Russia and Iran in the east. These difficulties changed its self-perception as a world power, especially in the period from the Treaty of Passarowitz (1718) to the French invasion of Egypt (1798). While the political atmosphere and discussions that were generated by these events brought deep change to Ottoman political thought, bureaucrats gained more power and influence as a result of the military defeats.²⁵ Thus, the need to renovate the military system became more and more apparent, and there was lively discussion as to how to achieve this.²⁶ Ottoman statesmen were considered unable to run state affairs effectively, senior military officers were accused of being the only cause of administrative problems, and scholars, who were supposed to warn and guide the statesmen, were sharply criticised. Sultan Muştafa III himself, who reigned during the third quarter of the eighteenth century, took a negative view of the power of the state, its administration, and the skills of statesmen, and complained about this situation in a poem written in the first year of his reign.²⁷

In the following years, interpretations about the Ottoman state as entering an “era of stagnation” (*sinn-i vukūf*) and ideas about how to save it from dissolution started to appear in statesmen’s books.²⁸ For instance, writings on the defeat of the Ottomans in the Russian war (1768–1774) include suggestions and recommendations for a new military order and a claim for reforming the administrative and political structures. However, while stressing the need to reform the military system, including the assignment of posts and duties to qualified people, real observation of *sharī‘ah*, prevention of bribery, regular inspections of provincial institutions, and finally a fair and not arbitrary use of appointments, dismissals, and property confiscations, these writings did not envisage a transformation in the political role of the sultan, but only insisted on vague concepts such as the “re-observation of *sharī‘ah* principles (*şar‘-i şarīfa dönüş*)”,²⁹ “establishment of a worldwide justice (*nizām-i ʿalamin ta’ṣisi*)”, “military order”, and “social welfare”.³⁰

While European political literature inspired some of these claims, reformists adopted the idea that translations from European languages were useful, but should be limited to the search for practical responses and solutions to current issues. It was no accident that most translations were either about mathematics, astronomy, or medicine, whereas military books were mainly either regulations and instructions, or biographies of successful military people and statesmen. Ragib Paşa (1699–1763), the Grand Vizier of the period of Sultan Muştafa III, owned some translations from European languages, by means of which he aimed at following innovations in the military field. One of the most significant was the translation of the British Regulations for the Royal Navy, but that of the *Artillery Manual* of Prussia was also in Ragib Paşa's library.³¹ It is also reported that he wished to have a version of Voltaire's *Éléments de la philosophie de Newton mis à la portée de tout le monde* (1738).³²

The interest in Voltaire's thought on the one hand, and in the figure of King Frederick II of Prussia on the other, was widely shared among the ruling classes of the Ottoman Empire. Certainly, they prepared the cultural background for the translation of *Anti-Machiavel*, which was associated with that of *The Prince*. British influence is also relevant in this context, at least if we are to believe that the translator (or assistant translator) of Machiavelli and its refutation—a book written by a German monarch and revised by a French *philosophe*—was Thomas Herbert, whose family kept alive the connection to its land of origin, as we shall see. This Pan-European influence must be emphasised, since reformist statesmen were aware that the European powers had outperformed the Ottoman Empire in terms of military technology, forcing them to reorganise the army and modernise its weapons.

It was in the context of this debate that Ottoman statesmen started to look at the European political system and technology as a model for their efforts to solve their internal problems. Rather than a merely editorial enterprise, their familiarity with Frederick II's *Anti-Machiavel* was the result of a practical effort to acquaint themselves with the most recent findings of European political and scientific thought. Therefore, instead of assuming, like Toderini, that Sultan Muştafa III had a genuine interest in *The Prince*, which would have been followed by the request to have a refutation of it after realising how immoral the work was, we should suppose that its translation was an unintended consequence of the circulation of *Anti-Machiavel*, which in turn was based on Frederick II's enduring fortune and prestige in the Ottoman world. On the other hand, the

fact that the latter is barely mentioned in the tradition inaugurated by Tanzini's preface to 1782 Machiavelli's edition, on the basis of alleged letters by Sestini, is consistent with the pro-Machiavellian inclination of this Florentine milieu.³³ Be that as it may, it is now time to abandon interpretation of these sources and to look at the Topkapı Palace manuscript.

OTTOMAN WORDS FOR EUROPEAN CLASSICS

The Topkapı Palace manuscript consists first and foremost of a translation of *Anti-Machiavel*, though without Voltaire's preface. This version consists of twenty-four chapters, numbered and titled according to the French edition, which is accurate with respect to the Italian text of *The Prince*. An exception is Chapter 4, whose original title—"Why the kingdom of Darius, conquered by Alexander, did not rebel against the successors of Alexander at his death"—is changed into "Comment on conserve le Trône" ("How to maintain the throne"), then translated into Ottoman Turkish as "Protecting the state (*Vach-i muhâfaza-yi davlat bayânindandır*)".³⁴ Following the French original, each chapter is divided in two parts: the words of *müşannif* ('the author', i.e., Machiavelli) and those of *mumayyiz* ('the person distinguishing between the right and the wrong', namely Frederick II). Although neither Machiavelli nor Frederick II is mentioned by name, each chapter of *The Prince* is followed by the Prussian king's criticism, with a heading entitled *Carâb-i Mumayyiz* ('The critic's answer').

Interestingly enough, the description of the work in the Topkapı Palace Museum Library Turkish Manuscripts Catalogue reads as follows: 'it is a refutation of a book, written in one of the European languages, by a person belonging to the school of a Jewish Dutch philosopher, called Spinoza, and it contains advice to rulers'.³⁵ Such a reference probably misinterprets the comparison between Spinoza and Machiavelli that opens *Anti-Machiavel*, according to which *The Prince* does for ethics what Spinoza's work does for faith—it overturns traditional ideas completely.³⁶ However, it is worth mentioning that an indirect association between this translation and a Spinozist emerges from the passage in the periodical *L'Esprit des Journaux*, which as early as 1783, as noted above, spread the information that Herbert had translated Boerhaave's medical writings into Ottoman Turkish, wrongly suggesting that the latter was somehow favourable to Spinoza.

Although the Topkapı Palace manuscript does not explicitly mention the title of *The Prince*, there is a translation for it—“*Fann-i Hukūmāt ve Siyāsat*” (“Science of government and politics”)—that we could adopt for this version.³⁷ This is a striking parallel with the European reception of Machiavelli’s work. When the Aristotelian philosopher Agostino Nifo plagiarised *The Prince* in 1521, the title he used for his Latin rewriting of the work was *De regnandi peritia*. Whereas this choice was always regarded as no more than a trick to avoid the suspect of plagiarism, Sydney Anglo has correctly pointed out that Nifo’s subject “is, specifically, *peritia*—the skill, the practical knowledge, which is gained only by experience”.³⁸ Thus both Nifo and the translator of the Ottoman Turkish version emphasised the practical character of *The Prince* and consequently paved the way for a long-term reception of the book as a handbook for statecraft. In accordance with this practical aim of the translation, the French word *politique* is rendered by “*Fann-i Tadbır ve Siyāsat*” (“the art of government matters and politics”) in the part of the manuscript containing *Anti-Machiavel*,³⁹ and by “*tadābır va hukūmāt*” (“measures and governments”) in the section containing *The Prince*.⁴⁰ This translation, far from betraying Machiavelli’s text, grasps its original conception of the politician as a “good surveyor” and the importance of measuring the balance of forces in a given situation.⁴¹

Determining the main characteristics of the Ottoman *Anti-Machiavel* is possible only by comparing its manuscript with the original French text. Moreover, we have to take into account that its final form might have been the product of discussions between Thomas Herbert and an Ottoman scholar appointed by the sultan. Therefore, their choices might have conveyed the intellectual constraints at the sultan’s court, as well as the influence of some specific input from European political culture, including Britain’s. Indeed, neither their Catholic faith nor their serving the Holy Roman Empire prevented the Herbert brothers from keeping in contact with their fellow countrymen living in Istanbul, as is perfectly shown by the marriage between the daughter of Peter Philip Herbert Freiherr von Rathkeal, Constance Catherine, and Spencer Smith, secretary of the British embassy and then *chargé d’affaires*, in 1798.⁴² A possible sign of this British influence is that the translation excludes some of Frederick II’s worst statements about Machiavelli, like the passage in Chapter 7 in which the Prussian monarch refers to the Florentine secretary as ‘a monster not even hell can bring out’. In accordance with the mid-eighteenth-century reception of Machiavelli’s works in the British

Isles—where they had become a key reference point for the Republican tradition—some of Frederick II's harsh comments about Machiavelli are translated by toning them down.⁴³

Conversely, we can explain the choice to eliminate Chapter 11 on the ecclesiastic principalities and Chapter 24 on why Italian princes lost their states as an attempt to adapt the text to the expectations of the Sublime Porte. No doubt, both chapters could have been removed for their strictly Italian tone, as might be proved by the fact that, at least in the case of Chapter 24, a summary of one and a half pages is provided. Yet, this is not so for Chapter 11, which deals with the effects of religious institutions on states, and is not included in the translation at all. Considering that religious hierarchy was part of the Ottoman administration, one might wonder whether this delicate aspect, too, might have played a role in the removal of this part from the translation. More interestingly, the translation omits a paragraph of Chapter 12 of *The Prince* dealing with the Greek city-states, and the heroism and war stories of their rulers, which clearly might have displeased the sultan.⁴⁴

Some parts within the text are also left out and several names and place names are excluded, while some sections, which include comments by Frederick II about western thought and philosophy, are simply not translated. In some very limited cases, Herbert and his Turkish assistant, if they really were responsible for this work, add their own views and occasionally make substantial changes to the text, by including their own opinions and thoughts directly. In particular, they intervene in Machiavelli's ideas on the political tradition of the Ottomans. For example, in Chapter 13, on auxiliaries and soldiery, they portray Istanbul's capture by the "Turk" as "*fath va tasbîr*" ("conquest and subjection").⁴⁵ Conversely, Machiavelli presented the Ottoman conquest of Greece as a historical process that was initiated by the Byzantine emperor—or the "emperor of Constantinople"—who, "to resist his neighbors, put ten thousand Turks in Greece; when the war was over they would not leave; this began Greek servitude under the infidels".⁴⁶ Evidently, the translator—or, perhaps, his assistant, if he existed and was a Turk—did not want to undermine the active role of the Ottomans in the conquest of the Eastern Roman Empire and therefore insisted on the fact that it was by no means caused by the poor political wisdom of the Byzantines. Incidentally, we should note that the translation renders the word "Turk" with "*davlat-i İslâmi*" ("Islamic state") in all the relevant sections where Machiavelli comments on the political structure of the Ottoman state.⁴⁷

As far as the text of *The Prince* is concerned, we observe very little intervention, beyond the occasional change to a paragraph, sentence, or word. A partial exception is Chapter 12, where the translation summarises a long section of five paragraphs concerning the harm caused by mercenaries. It also omits a paragraph in which Machiavelli, recommending the use of one's own soldiery, says that when the Renaissance condottiero Cesare Borgia made use of mercenaries, he was less respected.⁴⁸ Finally, after this section, the Ottoman version sums up Machiavelli's examples of bad outcomes that can arise when a commander treats his soldiers too softly, implicitly anticipating Şānīzādah Mahmad ‘Atāllāh Efendi's *Tanbīhāt-i Hukumrān bā sar'askarān*, which, as said above, was presented to Muṣṭafā's successor, Sultan Selīm III.⁴⁹ In other instances, some private names and names of places and of books are omitted.⁵⁰

As the examples discussed above already show, the interventions on the original text, including the removal of sections, are all but coincidental or random. Usually, the translation omits passages that are found objectionable or unnecessary. In some places, it summarises sections that might have been regarded as too detailed. For instance, the substitution of the original text of Chapter 24 with a summary is justified by the claim that its full content would appear useless or inessential.⁵¹ Much more than Machiavelli's text, the translation manipulates Frederick II's refutation of it. Privileged targets of interventions are thoughts about European philosophy, but sometimes comments about ancient philosophy or criticism of medieval political thinking are excluded as well, or replaced by notes that follow the translator's (or his assistant's) own view. In short, he rewrote the text while translating it into Ottoman Turkish, and took local politics and thought into consideration, so as to reflect some of the choices and orientations of their representatives.

The protection of tendencies in the Ottoman political world lies behind the attitude of the translator and his possible assistant. At the same time, they are very diligent in trying to make European concepts and terms comprehensible to another culture. In this respect, their interaction might have been crucial. For instance, the words “principality” and “government” are translated as *davlat*, *davlat-i mustakilla*, and *ḥukūmāt*, and the word “state” as *davlat* and *duval* (plural).⁵² These translations should not be taken for granted: the word *ḥukūmāt*, for instance, was generally used for the “governing body” in Ottoman political terminology.⁵³ It also had specific uses in the administrative and judicial context. It is noteworthy that, until the eighteenth century, *ḥukūmāt* was also

adopted in reference to central organisation and administration, as well as the tasks fulfilled by them, including the definition of the exact scope of the authority of governors (*beylerbeyis*) and military judges (*kaz'askars*). However, between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—that is, in the same period as the translation of *Anti-Machiavel*—the word *ḥukūmāt* took on a new meaning, expressing the functions of the state.⁵⁴ Besides a certain overlapping between the two words, which in some instances appear to be interchangeable, the word *davlat* is preferred for the powers that had some tradition and had ruled a territory for a long time, whereas the word *ḥukūmāt* is used for newly established and small states.⁵⁵ However, we also find it in relation to the sphere of power of the ruler, or just to mean administration and power.⁵⁶

For obvious reasons, the ways in which the word “prince” is translated in the manuscript are of particular interest here. While *ḥukūmāt* covers a semantic sphere that goes from “owner of the throne” to “ruler”, there are a number of different solutions for “prince”, running from *hakīm* (“sovereign”—the most recurring one—to *ūlūl al-amr* (“those who have authority”), *valiyu ni'mat sāhib-i taht* (“he who is blessed with ownership of the throne”), *hakīm-i mustakil* (“independent sovereign”), *kral* (“king”), or *sāhib-i davlat* (“owner of the state”).⁵⁷ On the other hand, while the word “king”, which is not very much used in *The Prince*, is translated as *malik*,⁵⁸ the title “sultan” is never adopted for Machiavelli’s prince, except in one general statement, in the sentence “*hurūc ‘alá al-Sultān*” (“revolting against the sultan”).⁵⁹ In so doing, the translation respected the Ottoman political tradition, which tended to restrict the word to Muslim rulers, but at the same time reflected the transition in course in the Ottoman conception of European rulers who, instead of inferior powers, from the mid-eighteenth century onwards were increasingly considered worthy of respect and, sometimes, emulation.⁶⁰

This choice shows us an important limitation to Machiavelli’s reception at the Ottoman court: some sense of political distance between Europe and the Islamic world. For instance, the term *pādişāh* is never used at all in *Anti-Machiavel*’s translation. The title referred to the “customary power” of the Ottoman sultans and was used for Muslim rulers only, especially emperors ruling over vast lands.⁶¹ The same occurs with a number of other titles, from *ḥudāvandigar*,⁶² generally used for Ottoman rulers and emperors, to *amir*, *gazī* (ghazi), *hān*, and *kağān* (khan). Even the term *ūlūl al-amr* (“those in authority”), which recurs in the first part of the text to describe the ruler in general, as we have

already seen, is not meant to specify a particular ruler. It is tempting to imagine these choices as the result of debates between Herbert and his associate on the best solutions to translate European words, concepts, and expressions.

CONCLUSION: FROM *ANTI-MACHIABEL* TO MACHIAVELLI

The translator of *Anti-Machiavel* tried to find original usages of traditional concepts by interpreting them in a new way. If we are to give credit to the European sources, it was a four-handed work. A native of Istanbul with British origins, who spoke Ottoman Turkish so fluently as to serve as dragoman, Thomas Herbert was surely aware of the main political concerns of the Sublime Porte. He might well have been the person to whom Sultan Muṣṭafā III entrusted the translation of *Anti-Machiavel*, possibly with the assistance of a ‘Turkish learned man’ who could help him to avoid words and expressions that might irritate the Ottoman court. However, the reverse might be true as well, supposing that, as for the version of Boerhaave’s medical writings, the translator was a trusted courtly scholar who benefitted from Herbert’s collaboration. For sure, the result reveals an advanced knowledge of both European languages and Ottoman political culture, the eighteenth century terminology of the text reflecting its own period.

The translation of *Anti-Machiavel* into Ottoman Turkish during the reign of Muṣṭafā III, when negative thoughts about Ottoman political and military power and the search for solutions peaked, mirrors the interest of Ottoman thinkers in European political literature as a source of alternative and effective practical solutions. The fact that chronicles and *safarnāməs*—memoirs written by Ottoman ambassadors—considered Frederick II of Prussia a military genius certainly played a role in the translation of *Anti-Machiavel* in those circumstances.⁶³ This admiration soon turned into a concrete effort of imitation, when, from 1790 to 1792, the ambassador Azmi Efendi was sent to Berlin and wrote a memorial in which he gave voice to his admiration for the Prussian administrative and military system and explicitly suggested that it ought to be imitated.⁶⁴ The political end of the translation of *Anti-Machiavel* was therefore accomplished. In a broader chronological framework, however, this translation introduced Machiavelli and his most famous work, *The Prince*, albeit via a refutation, to Ottoman culture. Moreover, we must acknowledge that this entry was a concealed one

for a further reason: the Topkapı Palace manuscript of *Anti-Machiavel* does not reveal any information about the identity of the author of the rejected work (except that he was an Italian), or that of the person who refuted it. As had been the case in Europe for a long time, Machiavelli could circulate only in hidden form without mentioning his name. Nonetheless, despite prohibition, his works made their way even in the Ottoman Empire.⁶⁵

NOTES

1. For a short account of the intricate publishing history of *Anti-Machiavel* see K. van Strien (2011), *Voltaire in Holland, 1736–1745* (Louvain: Edition Peters): 103–134, 391–440. For a critical edition of the work, see Frederick II of Prussia (1958), *L'Anti-Machiavel: Édition critique avec les remaniements de Voltaire pour les deux versions*, ed. C. Fleischauer (Geneva: Institut et Musée Voltaire); an English translation is also available: Frederick II of Prussia (1981), *The Refutation of Machiavelli's Prince: or, Anti-Machiavel*, ed. and trans. P. Sonnino (Athens: Ohio University Press).
2. R.H. Davison (1963), *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856–1876* (Princeton: Princeton University Press): 5.
3. M.K. Bilgegil (1973), *Rönesans Çağında Edebiyatında Türk Takdirkârlığı* (Erzurum: Atatürk Üniversitesi Basımevi): 53. See also P. Preto (2013), *Venezia e i turchi*, 2nd ed. (Rome: Viella): 261, fn. 66; and Z. Yilmazer (1988–2013), “IV. Murât”, in: *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, 44 vols. (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı): Vol. XXXI, 177–183: 182.
4. For other possible translations of *The Prince*, see H.Z. Ülken (1997), *Uyanış Devirlerinde Tercümenin Rolü*, 3rd. (İstanbul: Ülken Yayımları): 334.
5. G. Toderini (1787), *Letteratura Turchesca*, 3 vols. (Venice: Giacomo Storti): Vol. I, 75: “Finalmente se sultan Mustafá volle vogarizzato il *Principe* del Machiavelli, ordinò pure, che in lingua turchesca si voltasse la confutazione di sì guasta politica, o l'*Anti-Machiavello* del re prussiano”.
6. N. Machiavelli (1919), *Hukumdâr*, trans. M. Şerif (İstanbul: Hukuk Matbaası): 32; Preto, *Venezia e i turchi*, 294–295.
7. Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Museum Library (henceforth TPML), *Hazinah* 372. For its description, see the catalogue of the library: F.E. Karatay (1961), *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi Türkçe Yazmalar* (İstanbul: Topkapı Palace): 513.
8. Recent studies of this manuscript include N.Y. Aydoğdu (2008), “Makyavelist Düşüncenin Türkiye'ye Girişşi-Onsekizinci Yüzyıl Osmanlı

- Siyaset Felsefesi” (Ph.D. dissertation: Marmara University), and C.B. Akal (2013), “Les traductions du Prince en Turquie”, *Synergies Turquie*, 6, 135–139: 137–138.
9. Toderini, *Letteratura Turchesca*, Vol. I, 75: “Il fatto è certo, e l'ebbi dal traduttore medesimo, signor d'alto stato, che vuole starsi nascosto. Da sultan Mustafá gli fu mandato il Machiavello unito alla confutazione in lingua francese, acciocchè dell'uno e dell'altra ne desse la traduzione, che di foglio in foglio faceva arrivare alle mani dell'imperatore”.
 10. N. Machiavelli (1782–1783), *Opere*, 6 vols. (Florence: Gaetano Cambiagi): Vol. I, 50*: “Fino in lingua turchesca fu tradotto il libro del Principe per ordine di Mustafá III per servire d'istruzione ad esso, ed a suoi figliuoli, ed i turchi ne conoscono l'autore, chiamato da essi *Muchievel*”. For the identification of Reginaldo Tanzini as the author of the preface, see G. Procacci (1965), *Studi sulla fortuna del Machiavelli* (Rome: Istituto Italiano per la Storia dell'Età Moderna e Contemporanea), 401fn; and S. Bertelli and P. Innocenti (1979), *Bibliografia Machiavelliana* (Verona: Edizioni Valdonega), 145*–146*.
 11. Machiavelli, *Opere*, Vol. I, 50*fn: “Noi abbiamo nel testo preferito l'autorità del sig. abate Sestini nostro insigne viaggiatore, il quale più distintamente parla di questo fatto in più sue lettere al sig. Giovanni Mariti, nelle quali afferma avergli detto il sig. dottor Gobbis, medico del Gran Signore, che la traduzione del Principe, e dell'Anti-Machiavello, fu fatta per ordine di Mustafá III da un valente dragomanno, insieme coll'assistenza di un dotto Turco, aggiuntogli dall'istesso Mustafá, e che questa traduzione esiste nella Libreria del Gran Signore nel Serraglio”. A general introduction to Sestini, with an emphasis on his numismatic interests, is L. Tondo (1990), *Domenico Sestini e il medagliere toscano* (Florence: Olschki). For the dragomans' activities as official interpreters serving European embassies, see E.N. Rothman (2009), “Interpreting Dragomans: Boundaries and Crossings in the Early Modern Mediterranean”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, no. 4, 771–800.
 12. *L'Esprit des Journaux, François et Étrangers*, 12, no. 9 (1783): 150: “Une partie des ses ouvrages a été traduite en turc par feu M. Herbert, dragoman de l'empereur”. The passage about Boerhaave and Spinoza reads as follows: “un jour qu'il s'étoit embarqué sur un bateau, il y rencontra un homme qui damnoit Spinoza, & se livroit aux dernieres imprecations contre lui. Boérhaave ayant écouté tranquillement ces transports de zèle, à la fin fit cette question à l'orateur: Avez vous lu Spinoza? Non, répondit-il. Et toute la compagnie éclata de rire. L'anti-Spinoza n'eut pas plutôt abordé à terre qu'il alla dénoncer Boérhaave comme un défenseur de la doctrine de Spinoza” (pp. 149–150). For a description of this periodical, see P. Vanden Broeck (1991), “L'Esprit des Journaux (1772–1818)”, in:

- J. Sgard (ed.), *Dictionnaire des journaux, 1600–1789* (Paris and Oxford: Voltaire Foundation), 396–397.
13. See C. von Wurzbach (1856–1891), “Herbert, Thomas von”, in: *Biographisches Lexikon des Kaiserthums Oesterreich*, 60 vols. (Wien: K.K. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei): vol. VIII, 352.
 14. F. Günergun (2007), “Ottoman Encounters with European Science: Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Translations into Turkish”, in: P. Burke and R. Po-chia Hsia (eds), *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*, (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press), 192–211: 209. See also E. Savage-Smith (1997), “Europe and Islam”, in: I. Loudon (ed.), *Western Medicine: An Illustrated History* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press), 38–53: 53.
 15. Herbert died in Istanbul on 6 March 1775. See Istanbul, Archives of the Church of St Mary Draperis, Register of Deaths, book 3, record no. 403.
 16. For a contemporary biographical sketch see *Notizie del mondo* 77 (24 September 1785), 1.
 17. Toderini, *Letteratura turchesca*, Vol. I, 134–135: “È certo che sultan Mustafá III amico e protettore dell’ottomana letteratura fece volgarizzare in lingua turchesca gli Aforismi del Boerave dal signor Herbert fratello dell’attuale internunzio cesareo alla Porta. L’opera, come mi disse il dottor Gobis medico fisico, trovasi nel Seraglio”. Also see ibidem, Vol. II, 151.
 18. N. Machiavelli (1813), *Opere*, 8 vols. (Italy [Florence: Guglielmo Piatti]): Vol. I, XLIII. For the identification of the editors and the publisher, see M. Parenti (1951), *Dizionario dei luoghi di stampa falsi, inventati o supposti in opere di autori e traduttori italiani: Con un’appendice sulla data “Italia” e un saggio sui falsi luoghi usati all’estero, o in Italia, da autori stranieri* (Florence: Sansoni Antiquaria), 214.
 19. D. Sestini (1779–1784), *Letttere (...) scritte dalla Sicilia e dalla Turchia a diversi suoi amici in Toscana*, 7 vols. (Florence; Livorno: Gaetano Cambiagi et al.). As the preface to the first volume shows, the publishers Cambiagi and Pagani had Sestini’s original letters in hand and were authorised by him to publish them. Each volume, starting from the second one, is dedicated to a different European ambassador in Istanbul. The letters sent to Mariti in 1778 are published in the sixth and seventh volume. On Mariti see the entry by R. Pasta (1960–), “Mariti, Giovanni”, in: *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* (Rome: Istituto dell’Enciclopedia Italiana): Vol. LXX, 592–595.
 20. A.-F. Artaud (1833), *Machiavel, son génie et ses erreurs*, 2 vols. (Paris: Firmin Didot frères): Vol. 2, 433: “A peu près vers cette époque, on suggéra à Mustapha III l’idée de faire traduire en turc le livre appelé *Del Principe*, pour l’usage, disait-on, du Grand-Seigneur et de ses fils. Sagredo assure, dans ses Mémoires sur les princes ottomans, qu’Amurat

- IV avait aussi fait faire cette traduction. Les Turcs appellent le Florentin *Muchievel*. L'abbé Sestini à qui j'ai parlé de ce premier fait à Florence, en confirme l'existence. Il a même déclaré dans ses lettres à Jean Mariti que la version entreprise pour Mustapha est dans la bibliothèque du sérail: le traducteur, auquel fut adjoint un littérateur turc fort savant, est M. Herbert, drogman. Sestini ajoute que la traduction de l'*Anti-Machiavel* de Frédéric accompagne celle du *Prince*. Le même fait est énoncé dans la préface de la Grammaire turque de M. David". The last reference is to A.L. Davids (1832), *A Grammar of the Turkish Language with a Preliminary Discourse on the Language and Literature of the Turkish Nations* (London: Parbury & Allen), 49*.
21. Toderini, *Letteratura turchesca*, Vol. I, 73 and 70, respectively: "I libri della Turca politica non sono contaminati da tanto inique doctrine"; "politica tutto machiavelliana, prima ancor che sorgesse il Machiavello, e così maestra che potrebbero gli ottomani a lui farne lezione".
 22. Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Hüsrev Paşa 805, 145. For another copy of the work, titled *Tarcuma-yi Kānūn-i Ḥarṣ*, see Istanbul Archaeology Museum, manuscript no. 513. There are two separate copies called *Vaṣṭyā-yi Safrāt* in the Istanbul University Library, nos. 6920 and 2677, respectively.
 23. Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Hüsrev Paşa 817-1 ve 817-2. The name of the translator is unknown.
 24. A note dated 1872 states that all of the books of Frederick II were sent to the Ottoman state on the orders of King Frederick Wilhelm IV of Prussia (r. 1840–1861). See Istanbul, Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, İrade Hariciye, no. 254/15084. See also A. Cevdet Paşa (1891), *Tārīḥ-i Cevdet*, 12 vols., 3rd. (İstanbul: Matba'a-yi Osmaniye): Vol. VIII, 148–149.
 25. T. Naff (1970), "Ottoman Diplomatic Relations with Europe in the Eighteenth Century: Patterns and Trends", in: T. Naff and R. Owen (eds), *Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press): 88–107: 89.
 26. A. Black (2001), *The History of Islamic Political Thought : From the Prophet to the Present* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press): 273.
 27. M.Ş. Hanioğlu (2008), *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press): 6.
 28. T. Naff (1970), "Introduction", in: T. Naff and R. Owen (eds), *Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press): 3–14: 4. See also E. Afyoncu (1990), "Tarih-i Kirim-Rusya Sefaretnamesi" (MA Thesis: Marmara University): 56–63, and M. Öz (1997), *Osmanlıda Çözikme ve Gelenekçi Yorumcuları* (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları): 88–91.
 29. Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought*, 264.

30. The political texts written in the eighteenth century have been the subject of many discussions. See V.H. Aksan (1993), “Ottoman Political History, 1768–1808”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 25, no. 1, 53–69.
31. İstanbul Archaeology Museum, manuscript no. 502, *İngiltere Kavānīn-i Bahriyesi Tercümesi*; N. Öztürk (1990), “İstanbul Arkeoloji Müzeleri Kütüphanesindeki Tarih Yazmaları”, *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları*, 63, 129–175: 148–149.
32. B. Lewis (1961), *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London and New York: Oxford University Press): 48.
33. On Tanzini’s inclination see Procacci, *Studi*, 372–380. After moving to Rome, in 1800 Tanzini formally recanted the ideas that had led him to edit Machiavelli’s works (pp. 387–388).
34. Compare TPML, *Hazīnah* 372, 30, with Frederick II of Prussia (1740), *Anti-Machiavel, ou Essai de Critique sur le Prince de Machiavel*, ed. M. de Voltaire (The Hague: Pierre Paupil): 21.
35. Karatay, *Topkapı Palace Museum Library*, 513: “Spinoza adındaki Hollandalı Yahudi Feylesofun mektebine müntesip bir zat tarafından Avrupa dillerinden birinde yazılmış olan ve memleket idare eden hükümdarlara dair nasayıhi ihtiyâ eden bir eser için yazılmış reddiyedir”. See also the original passage in the manuscript, TPML, *Hazīnah* 372, 1.
36. M.Ş. Hanoğlu (1995), *The Young Turks in Opposition* (New York: Oxford University Press): 13. Because of this false attribution to a Spinozist, the author considers the work a refutation of Spinoza (see p. 222, fn. 55). On Machiavelli and Spinoza see E. Haitsma Mulier, *A Controversial Republican: Dutch Views on Machiavelli in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, in: G. Bock, Q. Skinner and M. Viroli (eds), *Machiavelli and Republicanism* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press): 247–263.
37. TPML, *Hazīnah* 372, 95 and 212.
38. S. Anglo (2005), *Machiavelli, The First Century: Studies in Enthusiasm, Hostility, Irrelevance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press): 48.
39. TPML, *Hazīnah* 372, 1; *Anti Machiavel*, VI. Similarly, the first Arabic translation of *The Prince* is entitled *al-Amîr fi ‘Ilm al-Tarîkh was al-Siyâsah wa al-Tadbîr* (“The Prince: The Science of History, Politics and Governance”). See A. El Ma’ani (2010), “The first Arabic Translation”, in: R. De Pol (ed.), *The First Translations of Machiavelli’s Prince: From the Sixteenth to the First Half of the Nineteenth Century* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi): 279–304: 289. On this translation, see now Elisabetta Benigni’s chapter in this book.
40. Frederick II of Prussia, *Anti-Machiavel*, 64: “politique moderne”. See also TPML, *Hazīnah* 372, 95: “tadâbîr va hukûmâtın tarz-i cedîdi”.
41. On this expression and its meaning see the *First Decennale*, 379–380, in N. Machiavelli (1989), *The Chief Works and Others*, ed. and trans. A. Gilbert, 3 vols. (Durham and London: Duke University Press): Vol. III, 1453.

42. A.H. de Groot (2000), “Dragomans’ Careers: The Change of Status in some Families connected with the British and Dutch Embassies at Istanbul, 1785–1829”, in: A. Hamilton, A.H. de Groot and M.H. van den Boogert (eds), *Friends and Rivals in the East: Studies in Anglo-Dutch Relations in the Levant from the Seventeenth to the Early Nineteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill): 223–246: 226.
43. TPML, *Hazīnah* 372, 66; Frederick II of Prussia, *Anti-Machiavel*, 39. See also TPML, *Hazīnah* 372, 42; Frederick II of Prussia, *Anti-Machiavel*, 27. On Machiavelli and the British Republican tradition see J.G.A. Pocock (1975), *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press). The epitaph of Herbert Freiherr von Rathkeal recalls that he was “descended from a British stock of noble and illustrious parentage, an origin and connexion he was proud to acknowledge and to justify by an almost patriotic attachment to our common country and countrymen, cemented still farther by the marriage of his second daughter, Miss Constance Herbert, to our last worthy and most respected chief in the Levant, John Spencer Smith”. See *The Gentleman’s Magazin and Historical Chronicle*, 77 (1802), 912. A genealogy of the Herbert family is published *ibidem*, 1012.
44. Frederick II of Prussia, *Anti-Machiavel*, 75; TPML, *Hazīnah* 372, 104.
45. Frederick II of Prussia, *Anti-Machiavel*, 85; TPML, *Hazīnah* 372, 108.
46. Machiavelli, *The Chief Works*, Vol. I, 52.
47. See, for instance, TPML, *Hazīnah* 372, 15, 32, 35, 37, and 158.
48. *Ibidem*, 109; Frederick II of Prussia, *Anti-Machiavel*, 87.
49. *Ibidem*, 76–83. See also TPML, *Hazīnah* 372, 103–104.
50. Examples include Pope Alexander VI in Chapter 3 (*ibidem*, 21), Pyrrhus in Chapter 4 (p. 35), Thebes and Numantia in Chapter 5 (p. 40), Theseus in Chapter 6 (p. 46), Ionia and Hellespont in Chapter 7 (p. 55), Nabis in Chapter 18 (p. 149), or Antonio da Venafro in Chapter 22 (p. 185).
51. *Ibidem*, 212. In the early nineteenth century the Egyptian Khedive Muḥammad ‘Alī extended this opinion to the whole work by saying: “This book [*The Prince*] is completely useless. These are all things that I already know”. See El Ma’ani, “The first Arabic Translation”, 281.
52. TPML, *Hazīnah* 372, 7.
53. M. Akif Aydin (1988–2013), “Hükümet”, in: *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, 44 vols. (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı): Vol. XVIII, 468.
54. M. İpsirli (1988–2013), “Hükümet”, in: *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, 44 vols. (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı): Vol. XVIII, 470.
55. TPML, *Hazīnah* 372, 7.
56. *Ibidem*, 8, 11, and 19.
57. *Ibidem*, 5, 10, 31, 36, 49 and 51.
58. *Ibidem*, 80 (*mulük ve salāṭīn*).

59. Ibidem, 10.
60. For the use of the word in the early ages of Islam, see B. Lewis (1988), *The Political Language of Islam* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988): 35 and 51–53.
61. H. İnalçık (1940–1988), “Padişah”, in: *Islam Ansiklopedisi*, 20 vols. (İstanbul: Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı): Vol. IX, 491–495: 491; A. Taneri (1978), *Osmâni Devleti'nin Kuruluş Döneminde Hükümdarlık Kurumunun Gelişmesi ve Saray Hayatı-Teskilatı* (Ankara: A.Ü. Dilve Tarih Coğrafya Fakültesi Yayınları): 220. See also Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam*, 98.
62. İnalçık, “Padişah”, 492.
63. See V.H. Aksan (1999), “An Ottoman Portrait of Frederick the Great”, *Oriente Moderno*, n. s., 18, no. 79, 203–215.
64. B. Lewis (1982), *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* (New York: W.W. Norton): 201–220.
65. On the circulation of Machiavelli’s *Prince* in the nineteenth-century Ottoman culture, see On the importance and typology of translation activity in the Ottoman imperial context see A. Meral (2013), “A Survey of Translation Activity in the Ottoman Empire”, *The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, 42, 105–155: 141.

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Translating Machiavelli in Egypt: *The Prince* and the Shaping of a New Political Vocabulary in the Nineteenth-Century Arab Mediterranean

Elisabetta Benigni

In a chapter of his famous book *Islam et modernité* (1986), the Moroccan intellectual Abdallah Laroui compared the philosophy of history in the writings of the Arab jurist and historian Ibn Khaldūn (1332–1406) with the political thought of Niccolò Machiavelli.¹ This comparison, which was and still is unusual to western readers, followed in the wake of debates dating back to the previous century. A popular anecdote about the Egyptian Khedive (viceroy) Muḥammad ‘Alī (r. 1805–1848) tells that when reading the translation of *The Prince* he had commissioned, he commented:

You, Italians, loudly praise your Machiavelli (...). For my part, I was more intrigued by the reading of another book (...) the History of Ibn Khaldūn. Compared to your Machiavelli, he is much more independent

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and relevant. You say that Machiavelli is banned in several states of Europe. Ibn Khaldun would have been even more.²

Whether the anecdote attributed to Muḥammad ‘Alī is authentic or not, it shows how debates about the reading of Machiavelli in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were not confined to Europe but extended to the Ottoman Empire, being rooted in local societies, as the comparison with Ibn Khaldūn demonstrates.

This chapter examines the unique manuscript copy of the first Arabic translation of *The Prince*, produced at the court of Muḥammad ‘Alī in 1832, and currently preserved in the Egyptian National Library and Archives in Cairo.³ In addressing the transformation of the language and the interpretation of key political concepts in Machiavelli's text, the primary aim of my study is to examine this translation as an illustration of nineteenth-century Italian-Arabic cultural exchanges. Furthermore, this chapter reveals how the Arabic translation of Machiavelli relates to texts that were circulating in the same time period, against the background of nineteenth-century ideas about language and state reforms and the rise of nationalism in the eastern Mediterranean. In doing so, it aims at challenging the conventional understanding of the reception of European texts within the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire, offering a view that reconnects the Arab nineteenth-century Renaissance (*al-Nahdah*) to an idea of “Mediterranean Risorgimento”. The first translation of 1832 will therefore be discussed in comparison with a second translation completed in 1912 within the context of Egyptian anti-colonial nationalism.

The manuscript has never been accurately analysed, probably because of the lack of communication between Europe and the Arab world as concerns philology and intellectual history.⁴ Scholarship dealing with Arabic translations of major European texts in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries usually focuses on the reception of European culture during *al-Nahdah*. The point of departure in this scholarship is that this encounter, and the resulting translations, contributed to the formation of Arab “modernity”.⁵ A number of recent works have offered a more nuanced interpretation of this historical phenomenon, showing how emerging ideas in philosophy, science and literature were not passively received, but creatively re-forged by a wide range of actors, including translators, literati and communities of readers.⁶ However, conventional interpretations of Arab translations are still premised on the assumption that translation and cultural reform projects in the nineteenth century

were a direct response to European influence, merely reproducing the “original” model.⁷ On the other hand, western studies investigating the circulation of Machiavelli’s work have emphasised the continuity of hermeneutic engagement with the text in different historical contexts, but have overlooked the Islamic reception of this work, only focusing on its European and Atlantic reception.⁸ This means that a more global understanding of the circulation of Machiavelli is still awaited. A transnational re-reading of the Arab Machiavelli, therefore, offers an opportunity to explore unconventional interpretations produced by a different readership, and to challenge the common wisdom about the formation of western and non-western modern political thought.

MEDITERRANEAN CONNECTIONS

In approaching the immense bibliography on Machiavelli’s *Prince*, one cannot fail to notice that the text has commonly been read as a foundation of the “canon” of modern western political thought. As a way to debunk this conventional wisdom, I will begin from the following question: What happens when a “canonical” text such as *The Prince* is read through the lens of Arabic, a language commonly identified with a culture located outside of the western teleology of modern political thought? My analysis will show how Machiavelli’s translator imported concepts which were unknown in the Ottoman public sphere, but also drew upon Islamic semantics through a set of linguistic negotiations. This process demonstrates how in the nineteenth century Machiavelli was read in a global and local vein at the same time. Machiavelli was translated into Arabic in a specific phase of Egypt’s cultural history which followed the Napoleonic expeditions. Consequently, the translator interpreted the text through the lenses of supposedly universal values originated in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe, primarily in France, and as such disseminated in colonial contexts. Yet he also reinterpreted its content against the background of place-specific cultural and political processes and regional networks of the circulation of ideas which were part of what could be defined as a nineteenth-century “Mediterranean Renaissance”, an expression used here with reference to *al-Nahdah* and the “Risorgimento” together, thus encompassing a cross-cultural space comprising Italy and the eastern Mediterranean in the aftermath of the Napoleonic expeditions.

With a few exceptions, even the emerging scholarship that deals with the notion of “Mediterranean Risorgimento” has not sufficiently taken the

Ottoman Empire into account. Scholars who have related the rise of nation-states to the Mediterranean circulation of ideas include the work of French historian Gilles Pécout. His studies have approached the nineteenth-century Italian Risorgimento in a transnational perspective, identifying the Mediterranean as a space of flows and mobility witnessing the intermingling of different experiences and ideas of nationalism and independence.⁹ Maurizio Isabella has also interpreted the Italian Risorgimento within the context of a wider “Mediterranean regeneration”, which was affected by nineteenth-century British and French political thinking, but at the same time gave rise to a distinctive set of ideas.¹⁰ However, mainstream historiography fails to recognise the fact that during the nineteenth century several regions of the Ottoman Empire experienced cultural and political movements that can be equated with those commonly included in the idea of “Risorgimento”.¹¹

The significance of this historical conjuncture has been emphasised by Peter Gran in a comparative study of Egypt and Italy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹² In analysing the cultural scene in both areas at the time of the late Enlightenment, Gran identifies a number of parallels, such as the resurgence of the classics and the perceived decline in language, the dominance of prose over poetry, the new wave of lexicographical and grammatical studies. Despite some obvious differences, according to Gran a parallel reading of the cultural history of Italy and Egypt from 1760 to 1850, namely during the advent of the modern nation-state, is highly illustrative of the benefits of comparative analysis. Drawing on Gran’s work and on recent studies that reconsider the conventional ideas of the “Risorgimento”, nationalism and revolutions from a southern perspective,¹³ I will argue that the circulating version of *The Prince* in nineteenth-century Cairo should be viewed as part of a trans-regional “Mediterranean Renaissance” in which ideas about language, political reform, national identity and sovereignty were passionately debated. In the first half of the century in particular, such debates were nurtured by commissioned translations, the publication of journals, pamphlets and editions of literary texts.

TRAVELLING TO THE EAST

Before looking at the first translation of 1832, it is worth assessing the geographical and cultural reach of the Arabic translation of *The Prince*. A number of questions arise: Was this a belated and peripheral

phenomenon of reception, or was it part of a larger cultural process of the circulation of knowledge in the eastern Mediterranean? In order to answer this question, it is useful to consider the Ottoman reception of *The Prince* before the Arabic translation. In a book titled *Letteratura turchesca* (1787), Abbot Giambattista Toderini (1728–1799) offers a vivid representation of the “atrocities” of Ottoman political behaviour mobilising the notion of “Machiavellianism”. He refers to Ottoman politics as “Machiavellian, even before the rise of Machiavelli”. Despite their unscrupulous conduct, Toderini concedes that the Ottomans were not guided by “Machiavellianism”: *The Prince* was translated (“vulgarised”) shortly before his stay (1781–1786) in the Ottoman Empire, commissioned by Sultan Muṣṭafā III (r. 1757–1774).¹⁴ The abbot, who was a strong anti-Machiavellian, also points out that the sultan commissioned a translation of *Anti-Machiavel* by King Frederick II of Prussia (r. 1740–1786) along with the text by Machiavelli contained in it to reinforce its confutation.¹⁵

Toderini’s account is only one of a larger number of reports informing European readers about “oriental” translations of *The Prince*. The high number of accounts of this kind suggests that anecdotes about the circulation of Machiavelli’s book in the Ottoman Empire became a cliché among travellers crossing the eastern Mediterranean during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The translation commissioned by Muṣṭafā III, for instance, is mentioned in a letter of the traveller and antiquarian Domenico Sestini (1750–1832). Sestini confirms Toderini’s account by writing to his friend Giovanni Mariti (1836–1806) that a dragoman, called d’Herbert, translated *The Prince* along with Frederick II’s *Anti-Machiavel* at the sultan’s request. Muṣṭafā III asked for this translation with the purpose of educating himself and his children.¹⁶ The manuscript, currently preserved at the Topkapı Palace Museum Library (*Hazine 372*), is undated. We can only conjecture that it was completed before 1786, prior to the departure of Toderini from Istanbul.¹⁷

When *The Prince* was translated into Arabic in 1832, there was therefore already one Ottoman Turkish translation of the text produced at the end of the eighteenth century. Furthermore, the parallel translation of Machiavelli’s *Prince* and Frederick II’s *Anti-Machiavel* suggests that the Ottoman Empire was not alien to eighteenth-century European debates about Machiavelli. The fact that the Ottoman court was already familiar with Machiavelli—and the arguments of anti-Machiavellianism—in the

eighteenth century through the dissemination of *Anti-Machiavel* leads to a further exploration of the commissioned translation in Cairo.

The Ottoman Empire was a rich and complex political-cultural entity, characterised by a variety of regional dynamics. The territories of the empire were characterised by the convergence of different languages and literary traditions, by a lively circulation of books, and by a readership acquainted with different languages.¹⁸ From the beginning of the nineteenth century onwards, a large number of translations from European languages became available in Ottoman Turkish, Arabic, Greek, and Armenian. This multilingual configuration was dominated by Arabic and Turkish as prestige languages. There was also a significant presence of Italian as the language of diplomatic affairs and cultural exchanges. It is within the context of such multiplicity of languages and ideas that an Arabic version of *The Prince* first appeared at the court of the Khedive Muḥammad ‘Alī, a local governor of Albanian origin who dreamt about turning the Egyptian *Wilāya* (the administrative division of the Ottoman Empire) into an independent state with imperial ambitions. Widely known for his idea of transforming Egypt through a series of economic, political and cultural reforms, Muḥammad ‘Alī was a prominent figure as a commissioner of translations and printing of technical, historical and military treatises written in European languages, as well as of new editions and prints of classical Islamic books, thus making a decisive contribution to the adoption and spread of the printed press in Egypt and beyond.¹⁹

Therefore, the gap between the translation requested in Istanbul by Muṣṭafā III and that produced in Cairo for Muḥammad ‘Alī is not just chronological, but cultural and political as well. By the time the second translation was completed, Egypt was gaining independence from the Ottoman authority, constructing its identity as a centralised and independent state. As a result, there was no longer any need to devote attention to the reading of *Anti-Machiavel*; on the contrary, Machiavelli's ideas were explicitly regarded as a role model rather than an anti-model for good governance. Machiavelli, however, did not stand alone. A careful look at the early nineteenth-century Egyptian manuscript opens a window onto the way Machiavelli was received and read in Cairo.

THE DRAGOMAN AND *THE PRINCE*

The Arabic version of Machiavelli's *Prince*, whose first page is signed by its translator Rāfā'il Zakhūr, is followed in the manuscript by another translation, in the same handwriting and entitled *Muqaddimāt fi haqq*

al-umam (“Introduction to the Right of the Nations”). This work is a partial translation of the *Le Droit des gens* (1758) by the Swiss philosopher Emer de Vattel. Despite the absence of the date of publication and any information regarding the translation, the popularity of Emer de Vattel during the eighteenth century and the fact that an Italian translation was available since the 1780s hint at the fact that the same person may have translated both texts together.²⁰ As a matter of fact, the choice of translating Machiavelli and Emer de Vattel, who advocate the embrace of non-theological constitutional principles based on the rule of law and social contract, seems consistent: the experience of the French occupation of Egypt and the process of reforming Egypt aroused interest in both Machiavelli’s and de Vattel’s theory of power and natural law.

The ideological implications behind this attempt to reconcile Machiavelli with Emer de Vattel within the narrative framework of the *al-Nahdah* through the translation process deserve closer scrutiny. The production of a growing number of translations of European texts into Arabic, as well as of editions of Islamic treatises and works of *Adab* (the Arabic term encompassing various literary genres, such as belle-lettres, history, geography, advice for kings), marked the Arab *al-Nahdah* particularly in Egypt.²¹ Machiavelli and de Vattel were read along with translations and editions of texts dealing with the art of government, philosophy of law, history and the decline and fall of empires, from both European languages and the Islamic tradition, such as the first printed version of the *Muqaddima* by Ibn Khaldūn, and the *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et leur decadence* (1734) by Montesquieu.²² Machiavelli’s and other European historico-philosophical writings were thus introduced into the variegated landscape of the late Ottoman philosophy of history and advice to kings (*Nasīhat al-mulūk*). Many of these literary enterprises were undertaken under the patronage of a political authority, reflecting the governmental project to assert a new conception of authority and to respond to emerging debates on laws and rights. In the case of *The Prince*, the active role of Muḥammad ‘Alī in commissioning the translation of the text is acknowledged in the introduction. The translator, Rāfā’il Zakhūr, writes that he translated the book “for the benefit of those wielding political power”, drawing the attention of the readers to Muḥammad ‘Alī as the viceroy (*nā’ib*) of the Kingdom of Egypt, the patron of the work and the commissioner of the translation.

A glimpse into the life of the translator, Rāfā’il Zakhūr, helps us understand Cairo’s multifaceted cultural scene in the early nineteenth

century. Details about the translator's life can be found in different sources from the period.²³ The sources convey the typical picture of a dragoman of the Ottoman Empire, incessantly moving across different religious and cultural contexts, and strongly connected to the established authorities, both colonial and local. He was a mediator who, thanks to his knowledge of French and Italian, entered positions of prestige in Italy, France and Egypt. Rāfā'il Zakhūr, also known as Rāfā'il al-turjumān ("Rāfā'il the interpreter"), was a Greek Catholic priest who belonged to the Basilian Salvatorian Order.

Born in Cairo in 1759, probably from a Syrian family whose origins were from Aleppo, Rāfā'il Zakhūr studied in Rome at the Greek College of St. Anastasius where he learned Italian. After his studies in Italy and a short period in Sidon, he went back to Cairo shortly before the French occupation of Egypt (1798–1801). During the years of the occupation, he worked for the French administration.²⁴ His name is mentioned three times in the famous chronicle entitled '*Ajā'ib al-āthār fī al-tarājim wa al-akhbār* ("The Marvels of the Works on Biographies and Histories") written by the shaykh of al-Azhar and historian 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Jabartī (1754–1822). According to al-Jabartī, Rāfā'il was the "first translator" of the court during the Napoleonic expedition,²⁵ where he was in charge of translating into Arabic documents produced by the French administration.²⁶ Rāfā'il was also included among the few Arab members of the *Institut d'Égypte*, the cultural institution founded by Napoleon to conduct archaeological, scientific and philological research during the Egyptian campaign.²⁷

When Bonaparte left Cairo, Rāfā'il's desire to return to Europe led him to send two letters to Napoleon in Italian. In the first, he expresses his aspiration to spend his life at the service of the French Republic²⁸; in the second, he encloses a short poem in Arabic devoted to the French ruler.²⁹ It is probably thanks to these letters that he attained his goal: Rāfā'il Zakhūr became professor of Arabic language at the *École spéciale des Langues orientales* in Paris from 1803 to 1816, as mentioned in the preface of an unfinished book about Egypt and the Jebal Druze ("Druze Mountain") dedicated to Bonaparte.³⁰ However, at some point he returned to Egypt, putting an end to his career in Paris: perhaps he felt that his expectations about his life in France were unfulfilled by the current political situation and, most likely, he saw Muhammad 'Alī's rise to power as an opportunity for a better career in a new state.

We learn about his arrival in Egypt from a note in the diary of the Italian scientist Gian Battista Brocchi (1772–1826). In 1822 Brocchi

recorded his meeting in Cairo with the dragoman “Don Rāfā’il, a teacher of Arabic language in the school founded by Muḥammad ‘Alī in the Būlāq district”.³¹ In the eyes of Muḥammad ‘Alī, the Būlāq area was a “laboratory” for the newly created Egypt: in the district he introduced in 1822 the first printing press in Egypt, along with new training schools designed to provide the new state with civil servants and army officers. The school offered courses in several fields, including mathematics, medicine, military and languages (mainly Italian, French and Arabic). The purpose of the printing workshop was primarily to produce textbooks for the nearby school, and they were largely translations from the European languages. Gian Battista Brocchi also notes that “Don Rāfā’il” was commissioned to translate Machiavelli’s *Prince* into Arabic by Muḥammad ‘Alī, who “was told about the usefulness of the book teaching eminent principles for the art of government to despotic sovereigns”.³² The manuscript is dated 1832, which means that Zakhūr probably devoted his efforts to “Arabicising” Machiavelli’s work between 1822 and 1832.

Was Rāfā’il Zakhūr’s translation successful? One likely answer is that it was not. The translation of *The Prince* is only partial, and it never reached the printing stage, despite the fact that works of its genre were widely printed.³³ The text is poorly written and replete with colloquial expressions, due to the fact that it was still in draft form, yet to be Arabicised and domesticated by the editors. The syntax is heavily influenced by the Italian, which was very familiar to the translator, to the extent that it is difficult to understand the Arabic without looking at the original Italian.³⁴ The translation process at the time of Muḥammad ‘Alī consisted of different stages: the translator, usually someone educated as a Christian like Rāfā’il Zakhūr, acted as the initial “mediator” between European languages and Arabic. A further probable reason is that Zukhūra’s classical Arabic (*fushā*) was weak. As he did not have an Azhari education and did not have an accurate knowledge of classical Arabic (*fushā*), he was unable to render the text in elegant and refined Arabic.³⁵ A further explanation for the colloquial and literal translation is that it was a first draft meant for further editing. In order to finalise the text, the translation bureau appointed Azhari shaykhs as editors and correctors working along with the translators: the editor (*muharrir*) oversaw the first round of revisions and the refinement of the Arabic, the corrector (*muṣahih*) was in charge of improving the literary accuracy of the language.³⁶

The draft format of the manuscript of the translation of *The Prince* does not allow us to carry out an analysis of the translation in terms of

syntax and style, which were of essential importance to the original text. Nonetheless, this draft version raises many questions about the immediate reception of Machiavelli's political vocabulary. As we shall see, the translator's work is ostensibly influenced by the adoption of new vocabulary, whose rendering into Arabic was still at an early stage, shaped by the conditions of colonial rule and by the increasing number of translations, the editing of Islamic medieval books of history, belle-lettres and political treatises.

CREATING THE LANGUAGE, CREATING THE STATE

Machiavelli's political thought should not have appeared radically new. Some of the concepts presented in *The Prince* were already familiar to Arabic readers well before the advent of Machiavelli, as the Latin Christian genre of "mirror for princes" is based on Aristotelian principles that are also at the heart of the Islamic treatises providing advice for rulers. These principles include the virtues of *fortuna* (destiny, good fortune) and *prudenza* (prudence). The mutating *fortuna*, impinging on human life, is translated into Arabic as *sa'd* or *hazz*. Both terms indicate "fate" or "chance", however the translator Rāfi'īl Zakhūr prefers *sa'd* for Machiavelli's *fortuna* when used in a positive sense, while he prefers *hazz* when *fortuna* is used to indicate destiny, regardless of whether this destiny is deemed positive or negative.³⁷ The notion of *prudenza* is mostly translated using the root of *fiṭnah* (astuteness), as in Chapter 15 when Machiavelli advises the prince about the need to be prudent (*faṭin*) enough "to know how to avoid the infamy of those vices that would take his state from him".³⁸ The translation of political terms related to the sphere of governance raise interesting questions. The concept of *stato* (state) is rendered with the Arabic *hukm* (pl. *ahkām*).³⁹ The meaning of the word *hukm* and its cognates are related to wisdom, order, power, authority, differing from the word *dawlah*, dynasty, which stands for "state" in current political Arabic vocabulary.⁴⁰ However, current Arabic language uses *hukūma* for "government". The translation of *The Prince* is one of the first examples of the nineteenth-century use of the root *ḥ-k-m* to signify "state" in the political-legal lexicon.⁴¹ The notion of *repubblica* (republic) is even more intriguing. This term was first introduced in the Arabic language and standardised during the nineteenth century, but was variously translated until the final *jumhūriyya*. The translation of *The Prince* provides documentary evidence about this process: Zakhūr translates *repubblica* as

mashyakhah, which is related to the word *shaykh* meaning “old, noble”.⁴² At the time of the Napoleonic invasion, the term *mashyakhah* for republic, whose usage will eventually be replaced by the word *jumhūr* (ordinary “group of people” and then used from the nineteenth century on with the meaning of “republic”), was used in official communiqués of the French occupation army in Egypt, as well as being listed in the first French-Arabic dictionary compiled by J.F. Ruphy (1802).⁴³ Since Rāfā'il Zakhūr was previously working in the office created by Napoleon, it is likely that he borrowed some terms from Ruphy’s dictionary.

The translation of words related to faith and religion is less problematic, given the richness of Arabic in this domain. Religion is mostly rendered with the word *dīn* and its plural *adyān* (faith, cult) or *amānah* (honesty, integrity). In Chapter 18, “How princes should keep their promises”, the “promises” in the title (*la fede* in the Italian original) is rendered with the combination of two terms “covenant” (*ahd*) and “integrity” (*amānah*).⁴⁴ In the same chapter, when Machiavelli refers to “two ways of fighting: one according to the laws, the other with force”, Zakhūr interestingly uses “bi- al- sharā'i” to translate “with laws”. The root *sh-r-* is the basis of the word *sharī'ah*, the Islamic law. With the introduction of the Napoleonic codes and translations from French, the term “law”, particularly with reference to non-Islamic legislation, was translated with other terms, such as *Qānūn* (from the Latin Canon, a term already used for the ruler’s law to differentiate its meaning from *sharī'ah*).⁴⁵ A similar tendency to use more immediate Islamic political vocabulary is also evident in the use of *sultān* for *imperatore* (emperor). The concept of “free will” in Chapter 25 is rendered with the Arabic construction *Irādatinā al-muṭlaqah*.⁴⁶ The translator makes no reference to the Islamic tradition of debates about freedom and free-will related to the terms *hurr* and *huriyyah*.⁴⁷ However, the word *hurr* is used in Chapter 5 when the translator refers to the acquisition of “those states (...) accustomed to living under their own laws and in liberty” with the Arabic “*bi-mūjibi sharā'i ihā wa 'ala al-huriyyah*”.⁴⁸ As for the concept of “civil principality” (Chapter 9), Zakhūr interprets it as “*al-amriyyāt al-madaniyyah*”, with reference to the root *m-d-n* of “city”, “civilisation”. The same chapter also contains two interesting notions: *privato cittadino* (private citizen) and *patria* (country). The first is translated with the periphrasis “*ahāl al-balad*” (“people of the country”), with no reference to the concept of citizenship, and the second with “*watān*”, a term which has a long history in medieval Arabic with the Latin sense of *patria*, which will become synonymous with “nation” in the nineteenth-century. As for “ecclesiastical princedoms”

in Chapter 11, the translator used “*al-amriyyāt al-kanā’isiyyah*”,⁴⁹ with direct reference to the church (in Arabic *Kānisa*, pl. *Kanā’is*). In the same chapter, however, religion is translated as *diyāna* (religious practice) with no specific reference to Christianity.⁵⁰

These and other linguistic features of the text should be seen in the context of a more general reshuffling of the Arabic vocabulary facing the challenges of nineteenth-century colonial impact and the rise of an increasingly global space of legal and political thought. Issues relating to the translation of terms from European languages were first addressed by the translator Rīfā’ah Rāfi’ al-Tahtāwī (1801/2–1873) coping with French. Upon the request of Ibrāhīm Pasha, son of Muḥammad ‘Alī, he undertook the project of compiling an Arabic-French dictionary that would include all the specialised terminology and translatable terms.⁵¹ Even though this project failed, al-Tahtāwī was highly motivated by his conviction that foreign European words were bound to become part (*dakhl*) of the Arab vocabulary, as had happened with Greek and Persian at the time of the Abbasids. Therefore, he chose to continue to add glossaries at the end or the beginning of the books he translated.⁵² Almost one decade before working on the translation of *The Prince*, Rāfi’il Zakhūr also embarked on the first Italian-Arabic dictionary, printed in Būlāq in 1822.

For al-Tahtāwī, Rāfi’il Zakhūr and other leading translators and literati of the schools founded by Muḥammad ‘Alī the introduction of foreign terms was a major concern and was intensively discussed. As a result of the many possibilities debated and put forward, there was not only one way to “absorb” foreign language into Arabic. As the translation of *The Prince* demonstrates, a translator could apply different strategies in the same text. In some cases, foreign names were “Arabicised” through transliteration; this was so for many proper names of historical or mythological figures present in Zakhūr’s *Prince*.⁵³ In other cases, the meaning of French or Italian terms was re-formulated according to the Arabic and Islamic literary traditions, for instance, *diyānah* (faith), *wātan* (fatherland) or *shari’ah* (Islamic law). Sometimes translators also resorted to the genitive case when no direct correspondence could be found: “*ahāl al-balad*” for “private citizen”, or “*irādatinā al-muṭlaqah*” for “free-will”.

In the following decades, the increasing number of translations reinforced the relationship between language and national identity. Debates over the need to revise or purify the Arabic language turned out to be a fundamental part of *al-Nahdah* discourse.⁵⁴ Grammarians and literati

argued for a purification of Arabic (like Nāṣif al-Yāzijī, 1800–1871, and his son Ibrāhim, 1847–1906) and for a simplification of the grammar (like Ahmād Fāris al-Shidyaq, 1805–1887, Yūsūf al-Asīrm 1815–1889 and Jurjī Zaydān, 1861–1941) stimulated by emergent ideas about language reform and its relation to national identity.

The “Risorgimento” atmosphere which took shape after the Napoleonic invasion in different areas of the Mediterranean was not alien to Egypt or Syria, where nineteenth-century debates about the Arabic language were marked by the slow emergence of nationalist claims. Debates within the Arab provinces, therefore, present many commonalities with those that were taking place in Italy, almost at the same time, as concerns the introduction of neologisms, the question of the purity of grammar and the need to reform language. The discussions stimulated by the translator and linguist Melchiorre Cesarotti (1730–1808),⁵⁵ and then by the novelist Alessandro Manzoni (1785–1873),⁵⁶ and the linguists Niccolò Tommaseo (1802–1874)⁵⁷ and Graziadio Isaia Ascoli (1829–1907),⁵⁸ clearly illustrate these parallelisms.

As demonstrated by the fact that all leading *al-Nahdah* figures came from different regions and belonged to different confessions, this was a cultural and political movement with a trans-regional and trans-confessional character. Arabic language was, in this sense, a particularly sensitive issue for Christians and Muslims, as it provided common ground for a trans-regional insurgency at a time in which the threat of colonialism and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire made the search for a unifying identity of paramount importance. Since almost all the protagonists of both the Arabic *Nahdah* were multilingual and thus belonged to different “nations”—akin to some of the leading figures of the Italian Risorgimento such as Ugo Foscolo and Niccolò Tommaseo—the essence of the debates was not related to the exclusiveness of a language confined within national borders. In both Arabic and Italian contexts, the discussion focused on the pursuit of a unified and simplified language, leaving aside local variants in order to lay the foundations for an ideal unity.⁵⁹

THE PRINCE OUTSIDE THE COURT: ANTI-COLONIAL READINGS

The Prince’s travelling to Egypt, however, did not end at the time of Muḥammad ‘Alī. In 1912, almost one century after the first translation by Rāfa’īl Zakhūr, a second version appeared in Cairo. The translator was

the nationalist intellectual, lawyer and writer Muḥammad Luṭfi Jum‘ah (1886–1953). Compared with the first translation, this second Arabic version of *The Prince* reached a larger public of readers as it was published by the newly established publisher Dār al-Ma‘ārif. The work is preceded by a long introduction which also includes an essay entitled *Tazkār Mākyāvīlī* (“A memory of Machiavelli”), where the translator describes in a passionate tone his first encounter with the work of the Florentine secretary. Moreover, he adds a short fictional story, *al-Laylah al-akhīra* (“The Last Night”), in which he showcases his creativity, locating Machiavelli’s death in Florence’s gloomy and decadent atmosphere.⁶⁰

The long introduction unveils the specific purpose of this translation. Unlike Rāfā’il Zakhūr’s *Prince*, this work is not the product of a patronage-based relationship. Rather, it is the outcome of a personal interest, and is addressed to a broader audience. A century after Muḥammad ‘Alī’s rise to power, the cultural and political purpose of translations in Egypt was very different. Muḥammad ‘Alī’s interest in Machiavelli stemmed from the pragmatism of the Khedive, who looked at the Florentine secretary as a source of inspiration in the larger process of the reform of state institutions and the army. The renewed interest in Machiavelli at the beginning of the twentieth century arises from a different context. The economic collapse during the reign of Khedive Ismā‘il (1863–1879), nephew of Muḥammad ‘Alī, along with the failure of the ‘Urābī revolt against the Khedive and the British occupation (1879) and the consequent establishment of the veiled British protectorate led by Evelyn Baring (1882–1914), first Earl of Cromer, aroused a strong nationalist sentiment among Egyptian literati. Intellectuals such as translator Luṭfi Jum‘ah, who in different ways participated in the protest against the British protectorate, were in search of a definition of what a “nation” is and the role citizens should play in it.⁶¹ Most particularly, they were rethinking the sovereign-subject relation, reflecting on the potential and the limits of this power relationship.

Luṭfi Jum‘ah’s political engagement clearly emerges in the above-mentioned introductory essay to his translation. His reading of *The Prince* is motivated by his curiosity about Machiavelli, which he discovered through political activist friends. After a long and frantic search, he finds the work in the Cairo book market of Ezbekiyya. Years later, inspired by his travels across Europe, he decides to translate it.⁶² During his travels he visits Florence, described as an earthly paradise, as well as Machiavelli’s

family house and his tomb.⁶³ He romanticises Machiavelli by reading his political work along with a text that he defines the “spiritual” and “oriental” counterpart of the rationality of Machiavelli, the famous four-line verses by the Persian poet Omar Khayyam (Rubayat)⁶⁴: “I read Khayyam in moments of sadness and anguish of my spirit in order to purify my soul drinking his sacred wine. I read *The Prince* when I want to recover from the intoxication of my fantasy and to come back to the difficult arena of reality”.⁶⁵ Machiavelli is, in the eyes of Lutfī Jum‘ah, the western rational spirit as opposed to the oriental wisdom, the victim of political disgrace, the exiled free intellectual mind. He sees his political misfortune and exile as a symbol of perennial political injustice. In speaking about Machiavelli’s imprisonment and exile he dwells upon the idea of intellectual solitude, referring to medieval Arab philosophers who suffered exile and political disgrace (al-Ghazālī, al-Fārābī, al-Kindī).⁶⁶ According to Lutfī al-Jum‘ah, despite the fact that Machiavelli was a “western”⁶⁷ author, whose soul is characterised by the inclination toward movement and activity, during his seclusion he embodied the typically oriental distinguishing features of calm, reflexion and solitude.⁶⁸ In short, through a language characterised by Orientalist tropes and essentialist dichotomies, he presents the figure of Machiavelli as an Italian political hero, whose universal message deserves to be incorporated into Islamic reformist thought and national discourse.

As far as the translation is concerned, the rendering into Arabic is fluid, showing the translator’s mastery of language skills. The Italian language and structure are transformed in order to adapt to Arabic syntactic and lexical forms. Lutfī Jum‘ah uses a rich vocabulary, avoiding some of the terms used by Zakhūr and replacing them with more current terminology. The disappearance of terms like Zakhūr’s *mashyakhāt* (“republics”) and *hukm* (“governance”) and their replacement with the currently used notions of *jumhūriyyāt* and *dawlah* are illustrative of this emergent translation ethos. Most notably, Lutfī Jum‘ah uses the word *waṭan* in order to render the Italian “patria”. Zakhūr’s translation displays the same choice for the rendering of the Italian “patria”. However, Lutfī Jum‘ah charges the word *waṭan* with a different political significance as compared with his predecessor. In the introduction, he often refers to the importance of the concept of “Italian” *waṭan* in Machiavelli. It should be pointed out that at the time of Lutfī Jum‘ah’s process of translation, *waṭan* was undergoing a significant semantic shift from the original Islamic notion of a place of origin to the contemporary meaning of territorial national

identity.⁶⁹ The use of the term in the two translations testifies to this shift in meaning: Zakhūr's *watān* is probably closer to Machiavelli's meaning of "patria", while in Lutfī Jum'ah *watān* is understood as nation state in the meaning prevailing after the nineteenth century. This enthusiastic nationalist reading of *The Prince* is evident in Chapter 26, which contains the famous appeal to Italy's liberation. Here Lutfī Jum'ah uses the voice of the Florentine secretary to address the people of Egypt, calling for them to continue their struggle against British colonialism and its alliance with local Egyptian rulers.⁷⁰

Lutfī Jum'ah domesticates *The Prince* in form and content, and his translation does not aim to be transparent. Rather, the long introduction and the personal memoirs of his "encounter" with Machiavelli's thought emphasise the strong individual and political commitment of the translator, underscoring the potential of his political interpretation. It is in fact more than a translation: it is an attempt to integrate Machiavelli into the current debate, approaching the text from his ideological standpoints, namely nationalism and reformed Islamic ideology, thanks to the use of a political vocabulary which makes him comparable to other reformers and political thinkers of his time. The "national" Machiavelli thus became an advocate for the legitimacy of the citizens' rebellion against the foreign occupation of the country. Seen in this light, this Egyptian nationalist and revolutionary interpretation of Machiavelli closely resembles the use of this text by Italian intellectuals like Benedetto Croce and Antonio Gramsci during the first decades of twentieth century.

THE LEZIONE DEGLI ANTICHI: A CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have argued that politics of translation, language reform and nationalist ideas are key contextual factors in translating Machiavelli in Egypt and in the wider Mediterranean space. In Italy, studies and editions of Machiavelli witnessed a widespread diffusion with the rise of republicanism and later with nationalism and the Risorgimento. Rather than being interpreted as marginal receptions, the Ottoman Turkish translation and the subsequent Arabic versions should be interpreted as important fragments in the larger picture of the Mediterranean circulation of Machiavelli in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Yet the reasons that are behind

the first (unfinished) Egyptian translation are still unknown. On the one hand, Muhammad ‘Alī, a *homo novus* who greatly invested in the establishment of an Egyptian army, perfectly embodies Machiavelli’s *principe nuovo* (new prince). Even his attitude towards the ‘*ulamā*’—the “aristocracy-like” class of judges and theologians—was ambivalent and unstable to the extent that a direct inspiration by *The Prince* appears plausible. In this sense, the most likely hypothesis is the Khedive commissioning the translation for his own personal use, reflecting his image on the “mirror for prince” and even using the text in his own political activity.⁷¹ On the other hand, the Khedive’s joint reading of Machiavelli and Ibn Khaldūn, his negative judgment and the fact that the text was never printed, allow us to give an alternative interpretation. The 1832 translation of *The Prince* was an attempt to integrate a book that was central to contemporary political debates in Egypt. This project was due not only to Muhammad ‘Alī’s willingness, but it also resulted from a wider context of burgeoning interest in law, governance and the concept of authority. This version of de Vattel’s *Law of Nations* accompanying *The Prince*, as well as the linguistic process of adaptation, illustrate the extent to which the translation is part of the construction of an Egyptian cultural and political identity. In this framework, *The Prince*’s first translation did not encounter the same fortune as, for instance, Rousseau or Montesquieu, which were more elegantly “Arabicised” and printed. Machiavelli’s translation remained hidden in a manuscript until the nationalist activist Lutfī Jum‘ah discovered it in the wake of the anti-colonial political struggle of the first decades of the twentieth century.

Machiavelli’s work, therefore, was radically reinterpreted in Arabic within the space of one century: first, it served as a “mirror for prince” for Muhammad ‘Alī; subsequently, it became the manifesto of nationalist anti-colonial discourse. During the first decades of the twentieth century, *The Prince* was not only reinterpreted and re-translated, but it was also incorporated into the new public discourse as a way to convey reflections on the legitimacy of the ruling power.

In many respects, from the standpoint of Islamic medieval political ideas, Machiavelli might have appeared superfluous because many of the tenets at the core of *The Prince* were already present in Islamic treatises on the art of government.⁷² However, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the reading of works of political theory such as

Machiavelli, Ibn Khaldūn and de Vattel and Montesquieu, was part of the current discourse of the crisis and renaissance of society. The translation of Machiavelli contributed to the process of reformulating the concepts of power and citizenship following the impact of the colonial power. In this sense, rather than looking at the translation of Machiavelli as a way to introduce ground-breaking ideas about power and politics in the Islamic context, this chapter suggests an opposite reading, which takes into consideration the set of challenges posed by the nineteenth-century “Mediterranean Renaissance” in territories like Egypt and Italy. These challenges created the conditions for the rediscovery of Machiavelli as a contribution to linguistic, political and social reforms. It was this rediscovery that prepared the ground for the subsequent political appropriations of the work in the twentieth century, when the Arab Machiavelli powerfully contributed to the formation of contemporary political discourse about the nation and the right of citizens to resist colonial hegemony.

NOTES

1. A. Laroui (1986), *Islam et modernité* (Paris: La Découverte). More recently, this comparison has been made by A. Black (2008), *The West and Islam: Religion and Political Thought in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press): 107–110.
2. The words of Muḥammad ‘Alī are quoted by the Austrian consul in Cairo, Giuseppe Acerbi. He describes his conversation with Muḥammad ‘Alī about Ibn Khaldūn and Machiavelli in a letter that he published as G. Acerbi (1831), “Lettera del signor Cons. Acerbi”, *Biblioteca Italiana*, 61, 289–298: 289.
3. See the National Library of Cairo’s catalogue of books: *Fahras al-kutub al-‘arabiyyah al-mawjūdah bi dār al-kutub al-miṣriyyah*, 9 vols. (Cairo: Matba‘at dār al-kutub, 1924–1959): Vol. V, Tārīkh 435. Until 1876, this manuscript was property of the *waqf* (mainmort property) at the Mosque of Sayyidnā al-Ḥusayn.
4. A first analysis of the translation was offered by M. Nallino (1931), “Intorno a due traduzioni arabe del *Principe* del Machiavelli”, *Oriente Moderno*, 11–12, 604–616, and E. Benigni (forthcoming), “When the Prince travelled to Egypt. Mehmed Ali, Machiavelli and the story of an unfinished translation project”, in: C. Mayeur Jaouen (ed.), *Adab et modernité: Un processus de civilisation?* (Leiden and Boston: Brill).

5. See A. Hourani (1983), *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798–1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press): 52, and I. Abu-Lughod (1963), *Arab Rediscovery of Europe: A Study in Cultural Encounters* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).
6. See M. Elshakry (2014), *Reading Darwin in Arabic, 1860–1950* (Chicago: Chicago University Press); P. Hill (2015), “The First Arabic Translations of Enlightenment Literature: the Damietta Circle of the 1800s and 1810s”, *Intellectual History Review*, 25, no. 2, 209–233.
7. For a critique, see S. Sheehi (2012), “Towards a Critical Theory of *al-Nahda*: Epistemology, Ideology and Capital”, *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 43, no. 2–3, 269–298: 271.
8. For instance, G. Procacci (1995), *Machiavelli nella cultura europea dell'età moderna* (Rome and Bari: Laterza); J.G.A Pocock (1975), *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press); A. Prosperi (2013), “Il Principe e la cultura europea”, in: N. Machiavelli, *Il Principe: Saggi e commenti* (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana): 41–65.
9. G. Pécout (2012), “Pour une lecture méditerranéenne et transnationale du Risorgimento”, *Revue d'histoire du XIX siècle*, 44, 29–47.
10. M. Isabella (2012), “Liberalism and Empire and the Mediterranean: The case of the Risorgimento”, in: S. Patriarca and L. Riall (eds), *The Risorgimento Revisited* (London and New York: Palgrave MacMillan): 232–254.
11. More recently, Maurizio Isabella and Konstantina Zanou have underlined the importance of the contacts between southern Europe and the Ottoman Empire in order to look at the development of political ideas during the long nineteenth century. See M. Isabella and K. Zanou (eds) (2016), *Mediterranean Diasporas: Politics and Ideas the Long 19th Century* (London and New York: Bloomsbury).
12. P. Gran (2005), “Egypt and Italy, 1760–1850: Toward a Comparative History”, in: N. Hanna and R. Abbas (eds), *Society and Economy in Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean 1600–1900: Essays in Honor of André Raymond* (Cairo: AUC Press): 11–35.
13. See as a way of example: R.M. Dainotto (2007), *Europe (in theory)* (Durham: Duke University Press); N.J. Moe (2002), *The View from Vesuvius: Italian Culture and the Southern Question* (Berkeley: University of California Press); L. Riall (2013), *Under the Volcano: Revolution in a Sicilian Town* (Oxford: Oxford University Press); L.T. Fawaz and C.A. Bayly (eds), with the collaboration of R. Ilbert (2002), *Modernity and Culture: From the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean* (New York: Columbia University Press); I. Coller (2012), “The Revolutionary Mediterranean”, in: P. McPhee (ed.), *A Companion to the French Revolution* (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons): 419–434.

14. G. Toderini (1787), *Letteratura turchesca*, 3 vols. (Venice: Giacomo Storti): Vol. I, 69.
15. Ibidem, Vol. I, 75. On this Ottoman Turkish translation of *Anti-Machiavel*, see Nergiz Yılmaz Aydoğdu's chapter in this volume. The habit of publishing *The Prince* accompanied by *Anti-Machiavel* is also attested by other coeval editions like: N. Machiavelli (1768), *Il Principe (...) e l'esame e confutazione dell'opera scritto in idioma francese ed ora tradotto in toscano* (Cosmopoli [Venice: Giambattista Pasquali]).
16. Preface to N. Machiavelli (1782–1783), *Opere*, 6 vols. (Florence: Gaetano Cambiagi): Vol. I, 50*. Some scholars refer to previous translations of *The Prince* into Turkish on the basis of Giovanni Sagredo's *Memorie Istoriche de' Monarchi Ottomani* (1673) and Pierre Bayle's *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* (1697). According to P. Preto (2013), *Venezia e i turchi*, 2nd ed. (Rome: Viella), 305, Bayle argues that translations were commissioned already under the reign of Murāt III (1574–1595), Mehmed III (1595–1603) and Murāt IV (1623–1640). See also C.B. Akal (2013), “Les traductions du Prince en Turquie”, *Synergies Turquie*, 6, 135–139: 136.
17. Ibidem, 137. For subsequent translations into Turkish completed in 1834, 1869 and 1880, see A. Meral (2013), “A Survey of Translation Activity in the Ottoman Empire”, *The Journal of Ottoman Studies*, 42, 105–155. On Turkish printing and translations in nineteenth-century Egypt, see the comprehensive study by E. İhsanoğlu (2011), *al-Atراك fi Miṣr wa Turāthihim al-Thaqāfi*, trans. S. Sa‘dāwī (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq) and J. Strauss (2000), *The Egyptian Connection in Nineteenth Century Ottoman Literary and Intellectual History* (Beirut: Orient-Institut der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft).
18. J. Strauss (2003), “Who Read What in the Ottoman Empire (19th and 20th Centuries)?”, *Arabic Middle Eastern Literatures*, 6, 39–76; Meral, A Survey of Translation Activity.
19. On the book printed or translated in Cairo in Muḥammad ‘Alī’s time see, among others, C. Van Allen Van Dyck (1896), *Iktifā’ al-Qunī ‘bi-mā huwa maṭbū’* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir); J. al-Dīn al-Shayyāl (1951), *Tārīkh al-tarjamah al-thaqāfiyyah fi Miṣr* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-‘Arabī); J. Heyworth-Dunne (1940), “Printing and Translation under Muḥammad ‘Alī of Egypt: The Foundation of Modern Arabic”, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 72, no. 4, 325–349; M.H. ‘Abd al-Raziq (1922), “Arabic Literature since the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century”, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, 2, no. 2, 249–265.
20. *Le droit des gens* by the Swiss jurist Emer de Vattel was translated into several European languages. The first Italian translation is: *Il diritto delle genti, ovvero Principii della legge naturale, applicati alla condotta e agli affari delle nazioni e de' sovrani: Opera scritta nell'idioma francese dal sig. di Vattel e recata nell'italiano da Lodovico Antonio Loschi* 3 vols.

- (Lyon: s.n., 1781–1783). On the Ottoman reception of de Vattel see M.S. Palabıyık (2014), “The Emergence of the Idea of ‘International Law’ in the Ottoman Empire before the Treaty of Paris (1856)”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 50, no. 2, 233–251.
21. J. Dakhlia (2002), “Les Miroirs des princes islamiques: Une modernité sourde?”, *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 57, no. 5, 1191–1206: 1203.
 22. The *Kitāb al-‘Ibar* (“Book of Example”) by Ibn Khaldūn, containing the famous *Muqaddimah* (“Prolegomena”), was printed in Būlāq in 1857, while the *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et de leur decadence* were translated as *Burlān al-bayān wa bayān al-burlān fi ikhtilāl dawlat al-Rūmān* by Ḥasan al-Jubaylī in 1842. Several translations of historical and philosophical books were produced during the same period. Notably: *Tārīkh Dawlat Iqlītyā* (“History of Italy”) by Mario Botta was translated by ‘Abdullah ‘Azīz and Ḥasan Effendi in 1833; *Bidāyat al-Qudamā’ wa Hidāyat al-Hukamā’* (“The Origins of the Ancients and the Guidance of the Sages”), an ancient history of Greece, Rome and the Near East, was translated by Muṣṭafā al-Zarābī in 1836 as a compendium of several works; *Qurrat al-Nūfūs wa al-‘Uyūn bi-siyar ma tawassat min al-Qurūn* (“Comforts of the Souls and Eyes in Events in Medieval Times”), a history of the Middle Ages in three volumes, also an assimilation of several works, was translated by Muṣṭafā al-Zarābī in 1840; *Maṭāli’ Shmūs al-Siyār fi Waqā’i‘ Kārlūs al-Thāni ‘Ashar* (“Histoire de Charles XII, Roi de Suède”), written originally by Voltaire, was translated by Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Bayyā’ in 1841; *Tārīkh al-Falāsifah* (“History of the Philosophers”) was translated by ‘Abdullah Ḥusayn in 1836. See Abu-Lughod, *Arab Rediscovery*, 63–67; Heyworth-Dunne, “Printing and Translation” al-Shayyāl, *Tārīkh al-tarjamah*; A. Perron (1843), “Lettre sur les écoles et l'imprimerie du pacha d'Égypte”, *Journal Asiatique*, s. 4, 2, 5–61.
 23. On Zakhūr see: C. Bachatly (1931), “Un manuscrit autographe de Don Rapaël, membre de l’Institut d’Égypte (1798)”, *Bulletin de L’Institut d’Égypte*, 13, 27–35; S. Moussa (2012), “Le mythe des Bédouins à l'aube du XIXe siècle: l'exemple de Dom Raphael de Monachis”, in: G. Ferreyrolles and L. Versini (eds), *Le Livre du monde et le monde des livres* (Paris: Presses de l’Université Paris-Sorbonne): 847–857; I. Coller (2010), *Arab France: Islam and the Making of Modern Europe, 1798–1831* (Berkeley: University of California Press): 112–113; F. Pouillon (ed.) (2008), *Dictionnaire des orientalistes de langue française* (Paris: Karthala): 307–308; P.C. Sadgrove (1998), “Zakhur, Pere Rufa’il”, in: J. Scott Meisami and P. Starkey (eds), *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, 2 vols. (London: Routledge): vol. II, 820.
 24. Bachatly, “Un manuscrit authographe”, 30.

25. ‘A. al-R. al-Jabartī (1888–1896), *Merveilles biographiques et historiques, ou, Chroniques*, trans. C. Mansour Bey et al., 9 vols. (Cairo: Imprimerie nationale): Vol. VI, 269.
26. Ibidem, Vol. VI, 279, and Vol. VII, 26.
27. *Décade Égyptienne*, an VII [1799–1800], 10. In the same journal Rāfā’īl is mentioned among those members commissioned to make an almanac of the seventh year of the French revolutionary calendar suitable for French, Copts and Muslims. See *Décade Égyptienne*, an VII [1799–1800], 66–67.
28. Letter dated 14 March 1802, quoted in Bachatly, “Un manuscript autographe”, 30.
29. Letter dated 20 November 1802, quoted ibidem.
30. Ibidem. According to Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl, during his sojourn in Paris “Don Raphael” wrote several works and translations from Arabic, including a guide to teach Arabic. The book was titled *Marj al-Azhār wa Bustān al-hawādīth wa l-akhbār* and remained in manuscript form. See al-Shayyāl, *Tārīkh al-tarjamah*, 76.
31. G.B. Brocchi (1841–1843), *Giornale delle osservazioni fatte ne’ viaggi in Egitto, nella Siria e nella Nubia*, 5 vols. (Bassano: Antonio Roberti): Vol. I, 159.
32. Ibidem, Vol. II, 369.
33. Chapters 23 and 26 are missing, while Chapters 24 and 25 are only partially translated.
34. See the translation of the Dedication to Lorenzo de’ Medici and also the incipit of Chapter 1: “All the states, all the dominions that have had or now have authority over men have been and now are either republics or principalities”; it is translated literally as “*Inna kulla al-ahkām wa kulla al-siyādāt tilka allatī qad malakat wa tamlikat sultāntan ‘alā al-nās kānat wa lam tazal immā mashyakhātin wa immā amīriyyāt*”. A comparison with the translation of the same sentence proposed by Muhammad Lutfī Jum‘ah provides an idea of the distance between the two versions. See N. Machiavelli (1912), *Kitāb al-Amīr wa huwa tārīkh al-imārāt al-gharbiyyah fī l-qurūn al-wusṭā*, ed. and trans. M.L. Jum‘ah (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-ma‘ārif).
35. When the translation was produced, al-Azhar was still the most prestigious school in Egypt and perhaps in the entire Islamic world. The al-Azhar curriculum included disciplines such as *Fiqh* (Islamic law), grammar, linguistic-related disciplines. See A.L. al-Sayyid Marsot (1972), “The Ulama of Cairo in the eighteenth and the nineteenth Centuries”, in: N.R. Keddie (ed.), *Scholars, Saints, and Sufis: Muslim Religious Institutions in the Middle East since 1500* (Berkeley: University of California Press): 149–165; M.K. al-Fiqī (1965), *Al-Azhar wa-athāruhu fī al-nahdah al-adabiyyah al-hadīthah* 2nd ed. (Cairo: Maktabat nahdah miṣr); G. Delanoue (1982), *Moralistes et politiques musulmans dans l’Egypte du XIXème siècle, 1798–1882* (Cairo: Institut Français d’Archéologie Orientale).

36. Heyworth-Dunne, “Printing and Translation”, 341.
37. Cairo, National Library and Archives of Egypt (henceforth NLAE), manuscript Tārīkh 435, 8 and 142 (for *sā‘d*), 6 (for *haṣṣ*).
38. Ibidem, 87.
39. See A.-M. Goichon (1954–2005), “Hukm”, in: P.J. Bearman *et al.* (eds), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 12 vols. (Leiden and Boston: Brill): Vol. III, 549. The modern word for government, *hukūmah*, derives from the same root. See B. Lewis (1954–2005), “Hukūma”, in: P.J. Bearman *et al.* (eds), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 12 vols. (Leiden and Boston: Brill): Vol. III: 551–552.
40. See F. Rosenthal (1954–2005), “Dawla”, in: P.J. Bearman *et al.* (eds), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 12 vols. (Leiden and Boston: Brill): Vol. II, 177–178.
41. We find similar use in other contemporary translations as well. Lewis, “Hukūma”, 552, reports that in the Turkish translation of Botta’s *Storia d’Italia* (see endnote 22) *hukūmet*, which is “commonly used in the sense of rule, political authority (...) has the same meaning in the Arabic translation of the first part of William Robertson’s *History of the Reign of Charles V* (Būlāq, 1842)”. However, the use of the root was not common. At the time of Zakhūr’s translation of *The Prince*, Shaykh Rifā‘ah al-Tahtāwī’s translated French state as “*tadbīr al-dawlah*” or “*tadbīr al-mamlakah*” (“government of the kingdom”). See R. al-Tahtāwī, *Takhlīṣ al-ibrīz*, now translated into English as: R. al-Tahtāwī (2011), *An Imam in Paris*, trans. D.L. Newman, (London: Saqi): 192, fn 2.
42. NLAE, manuscript Tārīkh 435, 8.
43. Al-Tahtāwī, *An Imam in Paris*, 307, fn 3. On the term “republic”, see Abu-Lughod, *Arab Rediscovery*, 33–36; A. Ayalon (1989), “Dimuqratiyya, Hurriya, Jumhuriyya: The Modernization of the Arabic Political Vocabulary”, *Asian and African Studies*, 23, 5–17.
44. NLAE, manuscript Tārīkh 435, 98.
45. On the translation of the Arabic *sharī‘ah* with “law” and the implications arising from the demarcation between the legal and the moral, see W.B. Hallaq (2013), *The Impossible Islamic State* (New York: Columbia University Press): 112. See also: T. Asad (2003), *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press): 205–256.
46. NLAE, manuscript Tārīkh 435, 142. On the possible influence of Islamic Pseudo-Aristotelianism on Machiavelli’s conception of will see Lucio Biasiori’s chapter in this volume.
47. F. Rosenthal (1960), *The Muslim Concept of Freedom Prior to the Nineteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill).
48. NLAE, manuscript Tārīkh 435, 29.

49. Ibidem, 60.
50. Ibidem, 61.
51. M. Sawaie (2000), “Rifa a Rafi al-Tahtawi and His Contribution to the Lexical Development of Modern Literary Arabic”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 32, 395–410.
52. Ibidem, 400.
53. In the manuscript, the foreign proper names of people and places are underlined, probably awaiting a second revision. The choice of transliteration was not shared among all translators: in the translation of Fénelon’s *Les Adventures de Télémaque* (1699) by al-Tahtawī, French names are changed into Arabic. See S.M. Tageldin (2017), “Fénelon’s Gods, al-Tahtawī’s Jinn: Trans-Mediterranean Fictionalities”, in M. Allan and E. Benigni (eds.), “Lingua Franca: Toward a Philology of the Sea”, special issue of *Philological Encounters*, 2, no. 1–2: 139–158.
54. See A. Patel (2013), *The Arab Nahdāh: The Making of Intellectual and Humanist Movement* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press): 102–126.
55. Melchiorre Cesarotti was an academic at Padua and the translator of such literary masters as Ossian, Aeschylus, Pindar, Voltaire, and Homer. In his *Saggio sulla filosofia delle lingue* (1788), he theorises the need for a renewal of the Italian language via translations and the acquisition of a new vocabulary. The renewal would be achieved, according to Cesarotti, through the knowledge of classical tradition combined with that of modern European languages. Due to his beliefs he was accused of “corrupting” the Italian language.
56. Alessandro Manzoni, the author of *I Promessi Sposi* (1827; 1840 and 1842), is considered to be the forefather of Italian historical novel. In his essays on language he claimed the need for a unified language based on the Florentine dialect.
57. A linguist and writer of Dalmatian origin, Niccolò Tommaseo wrote about the Italian language, and authored the monumental *Dizionario della lingua italiana* (1865–1874). Tommaseo’s ideal of a unified Italian language followed in the wake of Manzoni’s ideas on the prominence of the Tuscan dialect.
58. A linguist and founder of the scientific journal *Archivio glottologico italiano*, Graziadio Isaia Ascoli refused the artificiality of the Florentine dialect as a language for Italians, and put forward the idea of language reform that would take into account the different regional variants.
59. In view of the fact that the translation of Machiavelli was carried out within a context of rise of nationalist ideals all over the Mediterranean, it could have been interesting to look at the translation of Chapter 26, namely, the appeal to Italy to rise against foreign oppression. The translation, however, ends dramatically at Chapter 25, suggesting that Chapter 26 was cut off or removed.

60. Machiavelli, *Kitāb al-Amīr*, 40–50.
61. Born in Alexandria in 1886, Luṭfī Jum‘ah received a higher degree of studies in law from the Khedival School in Cairo and at the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut. He travelled to Europe between 1908 and 1912 and received his doctorate degree in Law from the University of Lyon in 1911. From 1906 onwards he was associated with the National Party, after his encounter with the two nationalist leaders Muṣṭafā Kāmil and Muhammad Farīd. In Lausanne he joined the editorial staff of the nationalist newspaper *al-Limā’* (“The Banner”). During his European years he devoted himself to the study of western philosophy and literature, learning Italian, English and French. He was a passionate disciple of the Islamic reformist, pan-Islamist and anti-colonial thinker Muḥammad ‘Abdu (1849–1905), with whom he corresponded for years. At this time, he campaigned intensively for Egyptian independence, giving talks in several European cities and founding two journals based in western Europe: *Şawt al-sha'b* (“The People’s Voice”), published in Geneva in Arabic, and *Misr* (“Egypt”), published in Geneva, Florence, Lyon and London in English. In short, his life was infused with twentieth-century notions of modernisation (*tamaddun*), a combination of nationalist political activism, a fascination with western culture, and the ideals of a reformed Islam.
62. Ibidem, 34.
63. Ibidem, 37.
64. It might be of interest to note that the “oriental” poet Omar Khayyam was probably better known in Europe than in the Arab world, after his work was introduced to the English-speaking world through the translations by Edward Fitzgerald (1809–1883).
65. Ibidem, 40.
66. Ibidem, 15.
67. Ibidem.
68. Ibidem, 15–16.
69. C. Wendell (1972), *The Evolution of the Egyptian National Image: From Its Origins to Ahmad Lutfī al-Sayyid* (Berkeley: University of California Press).
70. Machiavelli, *Kitāb al-Amīr*, 193–198.
71. As reported by Giuseppe Acerbi, Muḥammad ‘Alī, who did not know written Arabic, commissioned the translation of the text into Turkish. At the time, the Arabic translation was identical to a Turkish one that has since been lost. See Acerbi, *Biblioteca Italiana*, 289.
72. A. Black (2011), *The History of Islamic Political Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press): 56.

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